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The Ruined Sanctuary.

By S. E. Waller.

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THE

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"THEIR LAWFUL OCCASIONS."

By RUDYARD KIPLING.*

Part I.

DISREGARDING the inventions of the Marine Captain whose other name is Gubbins, let a plain statement suffice.

H.M.S. *Caryatid* went to Portland to join Blue Fleet for manœuvres. I travelled overland from London by way of Portsmouth, where I fell among friends. When I reached Portland, H.M.S. *Caryatid*, whose guest I was to have been, had, with Blue Fleet, already sailed for some secret rendezvous off the west coast of Ireland, and Portland breakwater was filled with Red Fleet, my official enemies and joyous acquaintances, who received me with immense hospitality. For example, Lieutenant-Commander A. L. Lignett, in charge of three destroyers, *Wraith*, *Stiletto*, and *Kobbold*, due to depart as advance guard that same evening, offered me a berth on his thirty-knot flagship; but I preferred my comforts, and so accepted sleeping-room in H.M.S. *Pedantic* (15,000 tons), leader of the second line. After dining aboard her, I took boat to Weymouth to get my kit aboard, as war would be declared at midnight. In transferring my allegiance, whatever the Marine Captain may say, I did no wrong. I truly intended to return to the *Pedantic* and assist in driving Blue Fleet off the seas. All I needed was a new tooth-brush, which I bought from a chemist in a side street at 9.15 p.m. As I turned to go, one entered seeking alleviation of a gum-boil. He was dressed in a check ulster, a black silk hat three sizes too small, cord breeches, boots, and pure brass spurs. These he managed painfully, stepping like a prisoner fresh from leg-irons. As he adjusted the pepper-plaster to the gum, the light fell on his face, and I recognised Mr. Emanuel Pyecroft, late second-class petty officer of H.M.S. *Archimandrite*, an unforgettable man, met a year before under Tom Wessels' roof in Plymouth. It occurred to me that when a petty officer takes to spurs, he may conceivably meditate desertion. For that reason, I, though a taxpayer, made no sign. Indeed, it was Mr. Pyecroft, following me out of the shop, who said hollowly: "What might you be doing here?"

"I'm going on manœuvres in the *Pedantic*," I replied.

"Ho!" said Mr. Pyecroft. "An' what manner o' manœuvres d'you expect to see in a blighted cathedral like the *Pedantic? I* know 'er. I knew 'er in Malta, when the *Vulcan* was 'er permanent tender. Manœuvres! You won't see more than 'Man an' arm watertight doors!' in your little woollen under-vest."

"I'm sorry for that."

"Why?" He lurched heavily as his spurs caught and twanged like tuning-forks. "War's declared at midnight. *Pedantics* be sugared! Buy an 'am an' see life!"

For the moment I fancied Mr. Pyecroft, a fugitive from justice, purposed that we two should embrace a Robin Hood career amid the uplands of Dorset. The spurs troubled me, and I made bold to say as much. "Them!" he said, coming to a halt. "They're part of the *prima facie* evidence. But as for me—let me carry your bag—I'm second in command, leadin'-'and, cook, steward, an' lavatory-man, with a few incidentals for sixpence a day extra, on No. 267 torpedo-boat."

"They wear spurs there?"

"Well," said Mr. Pyecroft, "seein' that Two Six Seven was told off to Blue Fleet, which left the day before yesterday, disguises are imperative. It transpired thus. The Right Honourable Admiral Master Frankie Frobisher, K.C.B., commandin' Blue Fleet, can't be bothered with one tin-torpedo-boat more or less; and what with lying' in the Reserf four years, an' what with the new kind o' tiffy which cleans dynamoes with brick-dust an' oil (Blast these spurs! They won't render!), Two Six Seven's steam gadgets was paralytic. Our Mr. Moorshed done 'is painstakin' best—it's 'is first command of a war-canoe, matoor age nineteen (Down that alley-way, please!); but be that as it may, 'Is 'Oliness Frankie is aware of us crabbin' ourselves round the break-

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water at five knots, an' steerin' *pari passu*, as the French say. (Up this alley-way, please!) If he'd given Mr. Hinchcliffe, our chief engineer, a little time, it would never 'ave transpired, for what Hinch can't drive he can coax; but the new port bein' a trifle cloudy, an' 'is joints tinglin' after a post-captain dinner, Frankie come on the upper bridge seekin' for a sacrifice. We, offerin' a broadside target, got it. 'E told us what 'is grandmamma, 'oo was a lady an' went to sea in stick-and-string bateaus, 'ad told 'im about steam. He throwed in 'is own prayers for the 'ealth an' safety of all steampackets an' their officers. Then 'e give us several distinct orders. The first few—I kept tally—was all about going to 'Ell; the next many was about not evolutin' in 'is company, dead or alive; an' the last all was simply repeatin' the motions in quick time. Knowin' Frankie's groovin' to be badly eroded by age and lack of attention, I didn't much panic; but our Mr. Moorshed, 'e took it a little to 'eart. Me an' Mr. Hinchcliffe consoled 'im as well as service conditions permits of, an' we 'ad a *résumé*-supper at the back o' the Camber—secluded *an'* lugubrious! Then one thing leadin' up to another, an' our orders, except about anchorin' in 'Ell, leavin' us a fair clear 'orizon, Number Two Six Seven is now (Mind the edge o' the wharf!) here!"

"'War's declared at midnight. *Pedantics* be sugared! Buy an 'am an' see life!'"

By mysterious doublings, he had brought me out on to the edge of a narrow strip of water crowded with coastwise shipping that runs far up into Weymouth town. A large foreign timber-brig lay at my feet, and under the round of her stern cowered, close to the wharf-edge, a slate-coloured, unkempt, two-funnelled craft of a type—but I am no expert—between the first-class torpedo-boats and the full-blooded destroyer. From her archaic torpedo-tube at the stern, and quick-firers forward and amidships, she must have dated from the early 'Nineties. Hammerings and clinkings, with spurts of steam and fumes of hot oil, arose from her inside, and a figure in a jersey squatted on the engine-room gratings.

"She ain't much of a war-canoe, but you'll see more life in 'er than on an 'ole squadron of *Pedantics*."

"Why? She's laid up here—and Blue Fleet have gone," I protested.

"Pre-cisely. Only, in 'is comprehensive orders, Frankie didn't put us out of action. Thus we're a non-neglectable fightin' factor which you mightn't think from this elevation; *an'* m'rover, Red Fleet don't know we're 'ere. Most of us"—he glanced proudly at his boots—"didn't run to spurs, but we're disguised pretty devious, as you might say. Morgan, our signalliser, when

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last seen, was a Dawlish bathin'-machine proprietor. Hinchcliffe was naturally a German waiter, and me you be'old as a squire of low degree, while that Levantine dragoman on the 'atch is our Mr. Moorshed. 'E was the second cutter's snotty—*my* snotty—on the *Archimandrite*—two years—Cape Station. Likewise on the West Coast, mangrove-swampin', an' gettin' the cutter stove in on small an' unlikely bars, an' manufacturin' lies to correspond. What I don't know about Mr. Moorshed is precisely the same gauge as what Mr. Moorshed don't know about me—'alf a millimetre, as you might say. 'E comes into awful opulence of 'is own when 'e's of age; an' judgin' from what passed between us when Frankie cursed 'im, I don't think 'e cares whether 'e's broke to-morrow or—the day after. Are you beginnin' to follow our tattics? They'll be worth followin'. Or are you goin' back to your nice little cabin on the *Pedantic*—which I lay they've just dismounted the third engineer out of—to eat four fat meals per diem, an' smoke in the casement?"

The figure in the jersey lifted its head and mumbled.

"Yes, sir," was Mr. Pyecroft's answer. "I 'ave ascertained that *Stiletto*, *Wraith*, and *Kobbold* left at 6 p.m. with first division o' Red Fleet's cruisers, except *Devolution* and *Cryptic*, first-class cruisers, which are delayed by engine-room defects." Then to me: "Won't you go aboard? Mr. Moorshed 'ud like someone to talk to. You buy an 'am an' see life."

At this he vanished; and the Demon of Pure Irresponsibility bade me lower myself from the edge of the wharf to the tea-tray plates of No. 267.

"What d'you want?" said the jersey.

"I want to join Blue Fleet if I can," I replied. "I've been left behind by—an accident."

"Well?"

"Mr. Pyecroft told me to buy a ham and see life. How big a ham do you need?"

"I don't want any ham, thank you. That's the way up the wharf. *Good* night."

"Good night!" I retraced my steps, wandered in the dark till I found a shop, and there purchased of sardines, canned tongue, lobster, and salmon, not less than half a hundredweight. A belated sausage-shop supplied me with a partially cut ham of pantomime tonnage. These things I, sweating, bore out to the edge of the wharf and sat down upon in the shadow of a crane. It was a fine, dark summer night, and from time to time I laughed happily to myself The adventure was preordained on the face of it. Pyecroft alone, spurred or barefoot, would have drawn me very far from the paths of circumspection; his advice to buy a ham and see life clinched it. Presently Mr. Pyecroft — I heard spurs clink — passed me. Then the jersey voice said: "What the devil's that?"

"'Asn't the visitor come aboard, sir? 'E told me that 'e'd purposely abandoned the *Pedantic* for the pleasure of the trip with us. Told me he was official correspondent for the *Times*, an' I know 'e's litt'ery by the way 'e tries to talk Navy-talk. 'Aven't you seen 'im, sir?"

Slowly and dispassionately the answer drawled along on the night: "Pye, you are without exception the biggest liar in the service!"

"Then what am I to do with the bag, sir? It's marked with 'is name." There was a pause till Mr. Moorshed said "Oh!" in a tone which the listener might construe precisely as he pleased.

"He was the maniac who wanted to buy a ham and see life—was he? If he goes back to the *Pedantic*——"

"Pre-cisely, sir. 'Gives it all away."

"Then what possessed *you* to give it away to him, you owl?"

"I've got 'is bag. If 'e gives anything away, 'e'll 'ave to go naked."

At this point I thought it best to rattle my tins and step out of the shadow of the crane.

"I've bought the ham," I called sweetly. "Have you still any objection to my seeing life, Mr. Moorshed?"

"All right, if you're insured. Won't you come down?"

I descended; Pyecroft, by a swift flank movement, possessing himself of all the provisions, which he bore to some hole forward.

"Have you known Mr. Pyecroft long?" said my host.

"Met him once, a year ago, at Devonport. What do you think of him?"

"What do *you* think of him?"

"I've left the *Pedantic*—her boat will be waiting for me at ten o'clock, too—simply because I happened to meet him," I replied.

"*That's* all right. If you'll come down below, we'll get some grub."

We descended a naked steel ladder to a steel-beamed tunnel perhaps twelve feet square by six high. Leather-topped lockers ran along either side; a swinging table, with

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tray and lamp above, occupied the centre. Other furniture there was none.

"You can't shave here, of course; we don't wash, and, as a rule, we eat with our fingers when we're at sea. D'you mind?"

Mr. Moorshed, black-haired, black-browed, sallow-complexioned, looked me over from head to foot and grinned. He was not handsome in any way, but his smile drew the heart. "You didn't happen to hear what Frankie told me from the flagship, did you? His last instructions, and I've logged 'em here in shorthand, were" — he opened a neat pocket-book:—"*Get out of this and conduct your own manœuvres in your own tinker fashion! You're a disgrace to the service, and your boat's offal.*"

"Awful?" I said.

"No — offal — tripes — swipes — ullage." Mr. Pyecroft entered, in the costume of his calling, with the ham and an assortment of tin dishes, which he dealt out like cards.

"I shall take these as my orders," said Mr. Moorshed. "I'm chucking the service at the end of the year, so it doesn't matter. Let us chow!"

We cut into the ham, washed it down with whisky, and then smoked. From the foreside of the bulkhead came an uninterrupted hammering and clinking, and now and then a hiss of steam.

"That's Mr. Hinchcliffe," said Pyecroft. "He's what is called a first-class engine-room artificer. If you 'and 'im a drum of oil an' leave 'im alone, 'e can coax a bicycle to do typewritin'."

Very leisurely, at the end of his first pipe, Mr. Moorshed drew out a folded map, cut from a newspaper, of the area of manœuvres, with the rules that regulate these wonderful things, below.

"Well, I suppose I know as much as an average stick-and-string admiral," he said, yawning. "Is our petticoat ready yet, Mr. Pyecroft?"

As a preparation for naval manœuvres, these councils seemed inadequate. I followed up the ladder into the gloom cast by the wharf edge and the big lumber-ship's side. When my eyes had stretched to the darkness, I saw that No. 267 had miraculously sprouted an extra pair of funnels—soft, for they gave as I touched them.

"More *prima facie* evidence! You runs a rope fore an' aft, an' you erects perpendick-u-arly two canvas tubes, which you distends with cane hoops, thus 'avin' four funnels like a destroyer. At the word o' command, up they go like a pair o' concertinas, an' consequently collapses equally 'andy when requisite. Comin' aft, we shall doubtless overtake the Dawlish bathin'-machine proprietor fittin' on 'er bustle."

Mr. Pyecroft whispered this in my ear as Moorshed moved towards a group at the stern.

"None of us who ain't built that way can be destroyers, but we can look as near it as we can. Let me explain to you, sir, that the stern of a Thornycroft boat, which we are *not*, comes out in a pretty bulge, 'olly different from the Yarrow mark, which again we are not. But, on the other 'and, *Dirk*, *Stiletto*, *Goblin*, *Ghoul*, *Djinn*, and *A-frite* —Red Fleet dee-stroyers with 'oom we 'ope to consort later on terms o' perfect equality—are Thornycrofts, an' carry that Grecian bend which we are now adjustin' to our *arrier-pensive*—as the French would put it—by means of painted canvas an' iron rods, bent as requisite. Between you an' me an' Frankie, we are the *Gnome*, now in the Fleet Reserve at Pompey—Portsmouth, I should say."

"The first sea will carry it all away," said Moorshed, leaning gloomily outboard, "but it will do for the present."

"We've a lot of *prima facie* evidence about us," Mr. Pyecroft went on. "A first-class torpedo-boat sits lower in the water than a destroyer. 'Ence we artificially raise our sides with a black canvas wash-streak to represent extra freeboard; *at* the same time paddin' out the cover of the forward three-pounder like as if it was a twelve-pounder, an' variously fakin' up the bows of 'er. As you might say, we've took thought an' added a cubit to our stature. It's our len'th that sugars us. A 'undred an' forty feet, which is our len'th, into two 'undred and ten, which is about the *Gnome's*, leaves seventy feet over, which we 'aven't got."

"Is this all your own notion, Mr. Pyecroft?" I asked.

"In spots, you might say—yes; though we all contributed to make up deficiencies. But Mr. Moorshed, not much carin' for further Navy after what Frankie said, certainly threw 'imself into the part with avidity."

"What the dickens are we going to do?"

"Speaking as a seaman gunner, I should say we'd wait till the sights came on, an' then fire. Speakin' as a torpedo-coxswain, L.T.O., T.I., M.D., etc., I presume we fall in—Number One in rear of the tube, etc., etc., secure tube to ball or diaphragm, clear away securin'-bar, release safety-pin from

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"'Pye, you are without exception the biggest liar in the service!'"

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lockin'-levers, an' pray 'Eaven to look down on us. As second in command o' 267, I say wait an' see!"

"We're off!" I said. The timber-ship had slid away from us.

"We are. Stern first, an' broadside on! If we don't 'it anything too 'ard, we'll do."

"Come on the bridge," said Mr. Moorshed. I saw no bridge, but fell over some sort of conning-tower forward, near which was a wheel. For the next few minutes I was more occupied with cursing my own folly than with the science of navigation. Therefore I cannot say how we got out of Weymouth harbour, nor why it was necessary to turn sharp to the left and wallow in what appeared to be surf.

"Excuse me," said Mr. Pyecroft, behind us, "*I* don't mind rammin' a bathin'-machine; but if only one of them week-end Weymouth blighters 'as thrown his empty baccy-tin into the sea 'ere, we'll rip our plates open on it. She isn't the *Archimandrite's* old cutter."

"I am hugging the shore," was the answer.

"There's no actual 'arm in 'uggin', but it can come expensive."

"Right O!" said Moorshed, putting down the wheel; and as we left those scant waters, I felt 267 move more freely.

A thin cough ran up the speaking-tube.

"Well, what is it, Mr. Hinchcliffe?"

"I merely wished to report that she is still continuin' to go, sir."

"Right O! Can we whack her up to fifteen, d'you think?"

"I'll try, sir; but we'd prefer to have the engine-room hatches open—at first, sir."

Whacked up then she was, and for half an hour we careered largely through the night, turning at last with a suddenness that slung us across the narrow deck.

"This," said Mr. Pyecroft, who received me on his chest as a large rock receives a shadow, "represents the *Gnome* arrivin' cautious from the direction o' Pompey."

He pointed through the darkness ahead, and after much staring, my eyes opened to a dozen destroyers, in two lines, some few hundred yards away.

"Those are the Red Fleet destroyer-

"'Get out of this and conduct your own manœuvres in your own tinker fashion!'"

flotilla, which is too frail to panic about among the full-blooded cruisers inside Portland breakwater, and several millimetres too excited over the approachin' war to keep a look-out inshore. 'Ence our tattics!"

We wailed through our siren—a long, malignant, hyæna-like howl—and a voice hailed us as we went astern tumultuously.

"The *Gnome*—Carteret-Jones—from Portsmouth, with orders—mm—mm—

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Stiletto," Moorshed answered through the megaphone in a high, whining voice, rather like a chaplain's.

"*Who?*"

"Carter—et—Jones."

'Oh!"

There was a pause; a voice cried to some friend: "It's Podgie, adrift on the high seas in charge of a little dee-stroyer!"

Another voice echoed "Podgie!" and from its note I gathered that Mr. Carteret-Jones had a reputation, but not for independent command.

"Who's your sub?" said the first speaker, a shadow on the bridge of the *Dirk*.

"A gunner at present, sir. *Stiletto*—broken down—turns over to us."

"When did *Stiletto* break down?"

"Off the Start, sir; two hours after, after she left here, I believe. My orders are to report to you for the signal-codes, and join Commander Hignett's flotilla, in attendance on *Stiletto*."

A smothered chuckle greeted this last. Moorshed's voice was high and uneasy. Said Pyecroft with a sigh: "The amount o' trouble me an' my bright spurs 'ad, fishin' out that incorrect information from torpedo coxswains and similar blighters in pubs all this afternoon, you would never believe."

"But has the *Stiletto* broken down?" I asked weakly.

"'Ow else are we to get Red Fleet's private signal-code? Anyway, if she 'asn't now, she will before manœuvres are ended. It's only executin' in anticipation."

"Go astern and send your coxswain aboard the *Dirk* for orders, Mr. Jones." Water carries sound well, but I do not know whether we were intended to hear the next sentence: "They must have given him *one* intelligent keeper."

"That's me," said Mr. Pyecroft, as a black and coal-stained dinghy—I did not foresee how well I should come to know her—was flung overside by three men. "'Avin' bought an 'am, we will now see life." He stepped into the boat and was away.

"I say, Podgie!"—the speaker was in the last of the line of destroyers, as we thumped astern—"aren't you lonely out there?"

"Oh, don't rag me!" said Moorshed. "Do you suppose I'll have to manœuvre with your flo-tilla?"

"No, Podgie. I'm pretty sure our commander will see you sifting cinders in Tophet before you come with our flo-tilla."

"Thank you! She steers rather wild at high speeds."

Two men laughed together.

"By the way, who is Mr. Carteret-Jones when he's at home?" I asked softly.

"I was with him in the *Britannia*. I didn't like him much, but I'm grateful to him now. I must tell him so some day."

"They seemed to know him hereabouts."

"He rammed the *Caryatid* twice with her own steam pinnace."

Presently, moved by long strokes, Mr. Pyecroft returned, skimming across the dark. The dinghy swung up behind him, even as his heel spurned it.

"Commander Fassett's compliments to Mr. L. Carteret-Jones, and the sooner he digs out in pursuance of Admiralty orders as received at Pompey, the better pleased Commander Fassett will be. But there's a lot more——"

"Whack her up, Mr. Hinchcliffe. Come on to the bridge. We can settle it as we go. Well?"

Mr. Pyecroft drew an important breath and slid off his cap.

"Day an' night private signals of Red Fleet *com*-plete, sir!" He handed a little paper to Moorshed. "You see, sir, the trouble was that Mr. Carteret-Jones, bein', so to say, a little new to 'is duties, 'ad forgot to give 'is gunner 'is Admiralty orders in writin', but, as I told Commander Fassett, Mr. Jones been repeatin' 'em to me, nervous-like, most of the way from Pompey, so I knew 'em by 'eart—an' better. The Commander, recognisin' in me a man of agility, cautioned me to be a father an' mother to Mr. Carteret-Jones."

"Didn't he know you?" I asked, thinking for the moment that there could be no duplicates of Emanuel Pyecroft in the Navy.

"What's a torpedo-gunner more or less to a full lootenant commandin' six thirty-knot destroyers for the first time? 'E seemed to cherish the 'ope that 'e might use the *Gnome* for 'is own 'orrible purposes; but what I told 'im about Mr. Jones's sad lack o' nerve comin' from Pompey, an' goin' dead slow on account of the dark, short-circuited *that* connection. 'M'rover,' I says to 'im, 'our orders is explicit. The *Stiletto's* reported broke down somewhere off the Start, an' we've been tryin' to coil down a new stiff steel hawser all the evenin', so it looks like towin' 'er back, don't it?' I says. That more than ever jams 'is turrets, an' makes 'im keen to get rid of us. 'E even 'inted that Mr. Carteret-Jones passin' 'awsers an' assistin' the impotent in a sea-way might come expensive on the taxpayer. I agreed in a

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disciplined way. I ain't proud. I ain't proud! But when I'm really diggin' out in the fancy line, I sometimes think that me in a copper punt, single-'anded, 'ud beat a cutter-full of De Rougemongs in a row round the fleet."

At this point I reclined without shame on Mr. Pyecroft's bosom, supported by his quivering arm.

"Well?" said Moorshed, scowling into the darkness, as 267's bows snapped at the short seas of the broader Channel and we swayed together.

"'You'd better go on,' says Commander Fassett, 'an' do what you're told to do. I don't envy Hignett if he has to dry-nurse the *Gnome's* commander. But what d'you want with signals?' 'e says. 'It's criminal lunacy to trust Mr. Jones with anything that steams.'

"'May I make an observation, sir?' I says. 'Suppose,' I says, 'you was torpedo-gunner on the *Gnome*, an' Mr. Carteret-Jones was your commandin' officer, an' you 'ad your reputation *as* a second in command for the first time,' I says, well knowin' it was *his* first command of a flotilla, 'what 'ud you do, sir? That gouged 'is unprotected ends open—clear back to the citadel."

"What did he say?" Moorshed jerked over his shoulder.

"If you were Mr. Carteret-Jones, it might be disrespect for me to repeat it, sir."

"Go ahead!" I heard the boy chuckle.

"'Do?' 'e says. 'I'd rub the young blighter's nose into it till I made a perishin' man of 'im, or a perspirin' pillow-case,' 'e says, 'which,' 'e adds, 'is forty per cent. more than he is at present.'

"Whilst 'e's gettin' the private signals—they're rather particular ones—I went forrard to see the *Dirk's* gunner about borrowin' a holdin'-down bolt for our twelve-pounder. My open ears, while I was rovin' over 'is packet, got me the followin' authentic particulars." I heard his voice change, and his feet shifted. "There's been a last council o' war of destroyer-captains at the flagship, an' a lot o' things 'as come out. To begin with, *Cryptic* and *Devolution*, Captain Pinke and Captain Malan——"

"*Cryptic* and *Devolution*, first-class cruisers," said Mr. Moorshed dreamily. "Go on, Pyecroft."

"——bein' delayed by minor defects in engine-room, did *not*, as we know, accompany first division of scouting cruisers, whose rendezvous is unknown, but presumed to be somewhere off the Lizard. *Cryptic* an' *Devolution* left at 10 p.m., still reportin' copious minor defects in engine-room. Admiral's final instructions was they was to put into Torbay, an' mend themselves there. If they can do it in twenty-four hours, they're to come on an' join the battle squadron at the first rendezvous, down Channel somewhere. (I didn't get *that*, sir.) If they can't, he'll think about sendin' them some destroyers for escort. But 'is present intention is to go 'ammer an' tongs down Channel, usin' 'is destroyers for all they're worth, an' keepin' Blue Fleet too busy off the Irish coast to sniff into any eshtuaries."

"But if those cruisers are crocks, why does the Admiral let 'em out of Weymouth at all?" I asked.

"The taxpayer," said Mr. Moorshed.

"An' newspapers," added Mr. Pyecroft. "In Torbay they'll look as they was muckin' about for strategical purposes—'ammerin' like 'ell in the engine-room all the weary day, an' the skipper droppin' questions down the engine-room-'atch every two or three minutes. *I've* been there. Now, sir?" I saw the white of his eye turn broad on Mr. Moorshed.

The boy dropped his chin over the speaking-tube.

"Mr. Hinchcliffe, what's her extreme economical radius?"

"Four hundred and twenty knots, down to swept bunkers."

"Can do," said Moorshed. "By the way, have her revolutions any bearing on her speed, Mr. Hinchcliffe?"

"None that I can make out yet, sir."

"Then slow to eight knots. We'll jog down to Forty-nine, forty-five, or four about, and three east. That puts us say forty miles from Torbay by nine o'clock to-morrow morning. We'll have to muck about till dusk before we run in and try our luck with the cruisers."

"Yes, sir. Their blighted picket-boats will be panickin' round them all night. It's considered good for the young gentlemen."

"Hallo! War's declared! They're off!" said Moorshed, and swung 267's head round to get a better view. A few miles to our right the low horizon was spangled with small balls of fire, while nearer ran a procession of t. y cigar ends.

"Red hot! Set 'em alight," said Mr. Pyecroft. "That's the destroyer-flotilla diggin' out for Commander Fassett's reputation."

The smaller lights disappeared; the glare

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"'Avin' bought an 'am, we will now see life.'"

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of the destroyers' funnels dwindled even as we watched.

"They're going down Channel with lights out, thus showin' their zeal an' drivin' all watch-officers crazy. Now, if you'll excuse me, I think I'll get you your pyjamas, an' you'll turn in."

He piloted me to the steel tunnel, where the ham still swung majestically over the swaying table, and dragged out trousers and a coat with a monk's hood, all hewn from one hairy inch-thick board.

"If you fall over in those, you'll be drowned. They're lammies. I'll chock you off with a pillow; but sleepin' on a torpedo-boat's what you might call an acquired 'abit."

"I coiled down on an iron-hard horsehair pillow next the quavering steel wall."

I coiled down on an iron-hard horsehair pillow next the quavering steel wall to acquire that habit. The sea, sliding over 267's skin, worried me with importunate, half-caught confidences. It drummed tackily to gather my attention, coughed, spat, cleared its throat, and, on the eve of that portentous communication, retired up stage as a multitude whispering. Anon, I caught the tramp of armies afoot, the hum of crowded cities awaiting an event, the single sob of a woman, and dry roaring of wild beasts. A dropped shovel clanging on the stokehold floor was, naturally enough, the unbarring of arena gates; our sucking uplift across the crest of some little swell, nothing less than the haling forth of new worlds; our half-turning descent into the hollow of its mate, the abysmal plunge of God-forgotten planets. Through all these phenomena and more—though I ran with wild horses over illimitable plains of rustling grass; though I crouched belly-flat under appalling fires of musketry; though I was Livingstone, painless and incurious in the grip of his lion—my shut eyes saw the lamp swinging in its gimbals, the irregularly gliding patch of light on the steel ladder, and every elastic shadow in the corners of the frail angle-irons; while my body strove to accommodate itself to the infernal vibra-

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tion of the machine. At the last I rolled limply on the floor, and woke to real life with a bruised nose and a great call to go on deck at once.

"It's all right," said a voice in my booming ears. "Morgan and Laughton are worse than you!"

I was gripping a rail. Mr. Pyecroft pointed with his foot to two bundles, beside a torpedo-tube, that at Weymouth had been a signaller and a most able seaman.

"She'd do better in a bigger sea," said Mr. Pyecroft. "The lop is what fetches it up."

The sky behind us whitened as I laboured, and the first dawn drove down the Channel, tipping the wavetops with a chill glare. To me that round wind which runs before the true day has ever been fortunate and of good omen. It cleared the trouble from my body and set my soul dancing to 267's heel and toe across the northerly set of the waves—such waves as I had often watched contemptuously from the deck of a ten-thousand-ton liner. They shouldered our little hull sideways, and passed, scalloped, and splayed out towards the coast, carrying our white wake in loops along their hollow backs. Successively, we looked down a lead-grey cutting of water for half a clear mile, were flung up on its ridge, beheld the Channel traffic—full-sailed to that fair breeze—all about us, and swung slantwise, light as a bladder, elastic as a basket, into the next furrow. Then the sun found us, struck the wet grey bows to living, leaping opal, the colourless deep to hard sapphire, the many sails to pearl, and the little steam-plume of our escape to an inconstant rainbow.

"A fair day and a fair wind for all, thank God!" said Emanuel Pyecroft, throwing back the cowl-like hood of his blanket coat. His face was pitted with coal-dust and grime, pallid for lack of sleep; but his eyes shone like a gull's.

"I told you you'd see life. Think o' the *Pedantic* now! Think o' her Number One chasin' the gobbies round the lower deck flats. Think o' the pore little snotties now bein' washed, fed, an' taught, an' the yeoman o' signals with a pink eye wakin' bright an' brisk to another perishin' day of five-flag 'oists. Whereas *we* shall caulk an' smoke cigarettes, same as the Spanish destroyers did for three weeks after war was declared." He dropped into the wardroom singing—

"If you're goin' to marry me, marry me, Bill,
It's no use muckin' about!"

The man at the wheel, uniformed in what had once been a tam-o'-shanter, a pair of very worn R.M.L.I. trousers rolled up to the knee, and a black sweater, was smoking a cigarette. Moorshed, in a grey Balaclava and a brown mackintosh with a flapping cape, hauled at our supplementary funnel-guys, and a thing like a waiter from a Soho restaurant sat at the head of the engine-room ladder exhorting the unseen below. The following wind beat down our smoke and covered all things with an inch-thick layer of stokers, so that eyelids, teeth, and feet gritted in their motions. I began to see that my previous experiences among battleships and cruisers had been altogether beside the mark.

DREAMS.

BIRDLIKE are the dreams that bring
Into youth its joy and spring;
Love and music and delight
Mark their coming and their flight.
Ah, if youth but only knew
Which were false and which were true!

Birdlike is my dream to-day,
Sweet it is, but will not stay;
Full of love and song it goes
Out into a world of prose.
Ah, if only it finds you
I shall know one dream that's true!

FELIX CARMEN.

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THE NOVICE IN PARLIAMENT

BY SIR GILBERT PARKER, M.P.

THE difference between visiting the House of Commons as a private citizen and going there as a member of Parliament is too great to be easily realised. When you approach St. Stephen's as a private citizen, the policemen who guard its approaches at the gateway of the members' yard eye you critically. These policemen are the pick of the police force and are very intelligent. They wave the private citizen on from the members' gate to the general entrance with an air of favour, not to say authority. At the general entrance he is, as one might say, carefully admitted to the outer corridor. Here, turning to the left hand, he can look down into the spacious Westminster Hall, where so many great events in English history have occurred. Statues of kings and queens and princes range along the wall. Straight ahead of him are corridors, approached by steps and lined with statues of the great men of parliamentary fame, such as Burke, Pitt, Falkland, Fox. Passing through this long hall of worthies, flanked by what are called conference-rooms, where members may meet deputations or their secretaries, the visitor comes, after the distance of a few hundred feet, to the outer lobby.

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Anyone entering this lobby for the first time must be greatly impressed. Its majestic proportions and beautiful, lofty dome give it an air of grandeur. From its doorways and the gloom beyond come slowly members of Parliament, thoughtful and preoccupied. They are making for the inner lobby, called the members' lobby, on the margin of the Chamber itself, or are going out to some of the numerous committee-rooms or refreshment-rooms. All is busy quiet. But suddenly you will see these same members hurrying back in answer to the summons of bells sounding simultaneously throughout all the precincts of the vast edifice. A division upon some measure is being called. These legislators pressing towards the Chamber are as much under discipline as a schoolboy in the strictest academy. The members' master is the "Whip" of his party, who sees that he votes properly, and will not let him go out of the House without a "pair"—that is, someone on the opposite side who goes also, thus not weakening the party.

It is a beautiful vista which sweeps from the chair of the Speaker in the House of Commons to the throne in the House of Lords. The building was so constructed that the King, looking down the long lane of chambers, corridors, and lobbies, could see, at his duty in his high wooden-canopied chair, the first Commoner of England, the Speaker of the House of Commons. There is a great nobility of architecture in the scarlet-benched Chamber of the Lords; there is an ecclesiastical and solemn beauty in the Chamber of the Commons—especially of a summer afternoon when the sun shines through the clerestory windows.

I seem to have strayed from my original purpose, but in reality I have not done so. I wished the reader to see, as it were in his mind's eye, what greets the gaze of any private citizen who is admitted to the members' gallery in the House and looks down on the swarming politicians, the majority with their hats on, each playing his own or his party's game. He cannot fail to be struck by the decorum of the House, though it seems sorely tried now and then by some violent or excitable critic of the Government. He certainly does feel how great is the dignity which surrounds the black-robed figure of the Speaker, who sits in his great chair, sometimes from three in the afternoon until three in the morning, with the break of an hour for a hasty dinner.

But familiarity might not strengthen his reverence if he chanced to see the great men, leaders of parties and popular figures in popular life, engaged upon some humdrum question which, apparently, calls neither for eloquence nor responsibility. Finding an exciting debate under way is all a matter of chance, unless you are shepherded to the occasion by an old member. As for respect for the Chamber, men who have sat in the reporters' gallery of the House for years, looking down upon it with a familiarity almost like contempt, have told me that when they themselves were elected to the Chamber, they realised many forms of terror unfelt before—that terror of responsibility never absent from the mind of a member who takes a real interest in his duties, or who is ambitious to rise. I do not believe that any man ever got influence over the House of Commons who did not feel that to speak in that ancient Chamber, where the famous men of centuries have done service for their country, was one of the hardest trials of their lives.

Let us go back a little. I have written of the way the private citizen was treated by the guardians of the gates. Now suppose you are a new member of the House of Commons. As you come down Whitehall and approach the palace of Westminster, you will naturally suppose that you will have to explain yourself to the policemen on guard. You may be very proud of being elected, but your pride will not justify you in assuming that you will be recognised off-hand as a member. Yet as you come to the crossing before the gates of the members' entrance, you will find a couple of policemen stopping all traffic for you. You walk through a lane made by omnibuses and carriages with a new and embarrassing sense of importance. You had forgotten, perhaps, or did not know, that a member may have all traffic stopped for him if he is on his way to the House of Commons. At the gate where you expected to be challenged, the tall policeman touches his hat. It is at once disconcerting and flattering. How does he know you are a member? You go down through the yard to the cloisters and meet other policemen who salute you. How do they know?

Take my own case—if I may be so personal. As I came to the cloister, a policeman touched his hat: "Good day, sir," he said. "Good day to you," I answered. "Everything all right at Gravesend, Mr. Parker?" Well, in the language of the streets, you

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might have knocked me down with a feather. He not only knew my name, but also my constituency! I came on into the outer corridor of the members' entrance. Another policeman respectfully welcomed me with a salute and my name. Inside, the superintendent also knew me! And so on up the staircase. There really was nothing mysterious about it all. These picked policemen have excellent memories. They get hold of the biographical picture-books of the House, and study the faces of all the new members, possibly for a week or ten days before the House opens. They seldom or never make a mistake. The first time I got into a hansom to go home late at night, I told the policeman my address: he never forgot it—and I was only one of several hundreds.

That is interesting, as showing the wonderful system which governs the House. The system has not been made, it has grown. Everything connected with the Chamber is what may be called "expert." The House has the reputation of being the best club in the world, and so I think it is. It is also, I think, the best-disciplined and best-organised administration in the world. The form is rigid, yet there is plenty of freedom; the etiquette is severe, yet, within that etiquette, you may be as simple and natural as in a private house.

I had seen and heard debates in the House of Commons as a private citizen; I had dined there; I knew several of the

THE OUTER LOBBY.

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ministers and many of the members personally, yet I never can forget my first entrance into the Chamber as "the elect of the people." It was at the taking of the oath of allegiance after the last General Election, in 1900. The House was to meet at three o'clock—that is the hour that the Speaker and the Chaplain enter the Chamber and prayers are read. I was there promptly to the moment. In the inner lobby I stayed to see the Speaker and Chaplain enter the Chamber. It was a stately proceeding. You see the Sergeant-at-Arms in rosetted coat, silk stockings, knee-breeches, and sword, coming slowly along the corridors from the Speaker's room, the Speaker in his silk stockings, knee-breeches, silk robe, and wig, following with the Chaplain. Only three people, but we have in them the Throne, the Church, the State centred. Everyone stands still as they pass; there is no hurrying to and fro now. The doorkeepers, erect in their handsome liveries, are motionless and respectful. The trio pass into the Chamber. Three times the Speaker and Chaplain bow as they come up the floor, and the members present bow also. They reach the great table, the Mace is put upon it. The Speaker and the Chaplain bow to each other now and stand at the head of the table. The doors are shut; such members as are in the Chamber take their places. The short service of psalms and prayers are read by the Chaplain. During prayers the members turn their faces to the wall—"and all the air a solemn stillness holds." Prayers over, the Speaker proceeds to the chair, and the Chaplain slowly leaves the Chamber.

Presently the doors are closed; there comes a mysterious knocking, the Sergeant-at-arms looks out through a small grating and asks who demands admittance. The reply comes: "A message from the King." The doors are again opened, and there comes slowly in a grey-headed, stately figure in a splendid scarlet uniform. He bows to the Chair. Half-way up the Chamber he bows again. Having reached the table, he bows once more. It is Black Rod. He reads the message summoning the faithful Commons to the House of Lords, to hear the King's speech read. This done, Black Rod retires slowly from the Chamber backwards, bowing three times as before. The King's speech having been read by the Lord Chancellor in the House of Lords (I cannot describe that interesting ceremony here), the Speaker returns in state with the Sergeant-at-Arms and the Mace to the House of Commons.

The taking of the oath is not a very formidable nor yet a very solemn proceeding, inasmuch as the only order of precedence observed is that a private member makes way for a minister. The Clerks of the House hand the Bible and the oath, which is printed upon a card, to a half-dozen members at a time. They all, standing in a row, repeat the oath and kiss the Book. Then they make their way to the table of the House, where they sign their names in full. After this they are escorted to the Speaker's chair, where they are quietly announced and presented, and the Speaker shakes hands with them, silently welcoming them to the Chamber.

The mode of taking the oath was extremely interesting to myself, because, although a new member and not at home in the Chamber, I could not help observing the amusing differences between the new members and the old. The old members were noticeable by their cheerful familiarity with each other, and by the way they lounged, with an air of possession, on the green benches. The new member alternately sat and stood, not quite at ease, at one moment ready to elbow his way into the throng crowding around the table to take the oath, at another hesitating and stepping back again, nervously stroking his silk hat. He greeted new members like himself with a self-conscious and yet vague and far-away air. I expect I was much like the others. At the same time, I could get a good deal of amusement out of my, and their, inexperience.

But there are many trying moments in the life of the new member. He has much to learn, and woe betide him if he does not learn quickly! In the House a member may sit with his hat on, but he must not stand with his hat on. He may not pass between another member addressing the House and the Speaker. He may not, however, be aware of the rule, or he may forget himself. It is a bad moment. Nobody has any sympathy. "Order! Order!" sounds all over the Chamber. Sometimes he turns to go back, but this is difficult, and then perhaps he turns himself into ridicule by crouching down and hurrying shamefacedly and abjectly to his seat. I have to admit that I once came between a member addressing the House and the Speaker, but so quickly, and I was placed so advantageously, that I think only one voice snarled "Order! Order!" But one of the oldest members growled at me as I passed him: "Mustn't do that! Mustn't do that!" I didn't do that again. Members are extremely tenacious of tradition and custom. A member is never spoken to by his name, but only by his constituency—that is to say, he is called

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MR. SPEAKER.

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PRAYERS.

"the member for Northampton" — or Aberdeen, or whatever place it may chance to be.

There is an expression called getting your sea-legs aboard a ship. Well, getting your parliamentary legs is a far more difficult thing, except to the very young and, therefore, self-possessed, or to a member highly charged with his own importance. For myself, I found my legs in a way by asking questions at what is called Question Time. That is to say, I put a couple of questions on the question-paper addressed to a certain Cabinet Minister. I only had to rise up in the House when the Speaker called my name, and say: "Mr. Speaker, I desire to ask the Colonial Secretary" (or whoever it might be) "question 39." It seems a very simple operation, but the sound of your own voice for the first time in that Chamber is embarrassing and distant. Not that the operation is so trying in itself; but when you are a new member, and your name is called, nearly every other member looks up from his paper with critical curiosity, to see what you are like, to hear your parliamentary voice. It is, however, a good way to make yourself at ease, and it is well to remember that people who are much at home before all kinds of audiences outside the House are not always at home there. Great lawyers, professors, historians, admirals, generals, men who have been familiar with public speaking all their lives, have sat for years in the House without opening their mouths more than once, and that was to make their maiden speeches. It must not be forgotten that every man is playing his own game in the House of Commons, and that if he is on the Government side, all the Opposition are critically listening —perhaps scornfully listening—while people of his own side will not be favourable until he has shown "the mettle of his pasture."

And that maiden speech! Well, the moment of marriage is nothing to it. I had been waiting for two days for the opportunity to speak on the Budget; but when the instant came, although the House was more than half empty, I would gladly have run away. I have been under fire more than once in my life, but I never experienced anything like that; not because I had not something to say—I was deeply anxious to say certain things, but my throat got dry, and my sight got dim, and my senses became confused. I had good matter prepared, I think, so far as facts were concerned, although I had not prepared a word so far as form went. I am bound to say that the House must have listened to me with great patience. I spoke for about twenty-five minutes; and although some members on the opposite side smiled sarcastically, and although my own side seemed to encourage me very little—I was too embarrassed to know—I managed for about four-fifths of the distance to keep my head. Then some on the opposite side made interruptions, not wholly unfriendly, and that threw me off. The remaining fifth of the speech was repetition. Next day the newspapers treated me in a friendly way, though I believe one of the most important of the Opposition papers said I was a great disappointment. I do not wonder. I certainly was a greater disappointment to myself than I could possibly have been to any other human being. Agitated, over-anxious as I was, my wonder now is that I did not break down.

However, the maiden speech was over. Then came what, to me, was one of the

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most agreeable experiences of my life. With a sense of exhaustion and painful self-criticism upon me, my attention was suddenly arrested by hearing myself referred to by a speaker on the opposite side. It was Mr. Bryce, the distinguished member for Aberdeen. He paid me some generous compliments and said some welcoming words, for which I can never be sufficiently grateful. I am a Conservative member, and, independently of that, I have been strongly opposed to some of Mr. Bryce's views, particularly upon the late war in South Africa; and in that maiden speech I was not, I regret to say, very generous in my remarks about the Liberal party. Mr. Bryce's friendly words were, therefore, the more magnanimous.

The most noticeable feature about my second speech was the fact that I was called to order by the Chairman of Committees five times, and that I sat down on my hat. I am glad to say that no one noticed the incident of the hat—in any case, no comment was made and no one rallied me. Being called to order by the Chairman of Committees is disconcerting. The Chairman held that I was not speaking to the question—that is to say, I was dealing with matter which could not be considered on the particular Vote then under discussion. At first the House was somewhat impatient with me, certain young members of my own side included; but I knew that my question had been dealt with on this same Vote before, and by alternately apologising to the House and committing the fault over again, I was able to call up three champions of procedure from the Irish, the Radical, and the Conservative side of the House, who held that I was right. It was too late for me to make an effective speech, but I carried my point—carried it with a rush beyond bounds of procedure, in order to say what I wished to say. Before I could easily be called to order again, I sat down.

It must not be thought that you can speak at any time in the House of Commons on any question. The fact is, you may have to wait six months before your particular subject comes up in the course of procedure. Then, when it is possible, you have to—as it called—catch the eye of the Speaker. Now, the Speaker generally answers first, quite naturally, to the eye of the members of the Ministry, and after that the most important of the private members. Waiting your turn or opportunity, the debate may, through no fault of

TAKING THE OATH.

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yours or of the House, come to an untimely end, and your speech does not occur. Your labour seems thrown away. One of the oldest members of the House, however, told me once that no speech he had ever prepared and not delivered was wasted. He always put the notes away, because every subject is recurrent, and conditions do not so swiftly change that the subject put by will not be suitable for a future occasion, with proper modifications.

One of the things that struck me first and most in the House was the good-fellowship among the members, no matter how strongly opposed politically. I have heard hard things said in the House of Commons, and I have been a spectator, on an occasion, of violence, but there is very little, if any, speaking that is personally offensive. Members on both sides mix with great good nature in the lobbies of the refreshment and smoking and reading rooms. I have heard one or two speeches which were in execrably bad taste, something to make you squirm, but on the whole it certainly is a Chamber of good manners and great decorum. It is wonderful, too, how you grow to respect people with whose ideas you have no sympathy. There are one or two rather vindictive Irishmen, and certainly one Labour member, whom I very much disliked before I went into the House; but the Irishmen are like lambs in the lobby, and the Labour member now lunches with me at my own table. This is not to say that the views of either of them appeal to me. It is to say that I understand their points of view.

BLACK ROD.

THE DIVISION LOBBY.

The thing I disliked most when I entered the House was being obliged, when a division upon a measure was called, to make tracks into the lobby and pass through a turnstile slowly with three or four hundred others, like a lot of schoolboys—this sometimes twenty times a day. It struck me as being a wicked waste of time. I am bound to say also it seemed rather commonplace and stupid. But there it was, and you had to take it or leave it. I do not feel the same irritation now concerning that very practical

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duty of recording your vote for or against measures and the clauses of measures which must influence the country either for good or evil. As for its being a waste of time, well, the proper answer would be: "That is what you are there to do." You are one of a number who, in order to be effective, work as a mass.

I get many agreeable things out of my life in the House of Commons; but no impression made upon me at all compares with the impression of delight which I have at being in touch with a large body of men most of whom have done things, most of whom are representative of important interests in the country—great merchants, great scientists, great lawyers, notable gentlemen of notable families, all devoting their lives to the service of their country. I frankly say that, except when very tired by a long sitting, I have never had a dull hour in the House of Commons, and there have been some thrilling moments.

AT THE BAR OF THE HOUSE: A CHARGE OF REFLECTING ON THE HONOUR OF PARLIAMENT.

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"WON'T YOU COME IN?"

By Oscar Wilson.

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THE MAN WHOM NOBODY LIKED.

By E. Phillips Oppenheim.*

HE came into their midst unexpectedly, apparently unconscious of the sudden silence which seemed designed to act as a barrier between him and them. He only smiled—a little malevolently, it is true, but still with some sense of humour. He dragged a chair across the lawn and seated himself in a cool place within a yard or so of his hostess.

"How very enterprising of you, Mr. Lyndham!" she murmured, lifting her parasol a little on one side, and inwardly rebelling against her husband's express instructions to be always civil to this man. "Have you walked all the way from Broom Hill in this sun?"

He assented, but without speech. His gesture was of the slightest. Really his manners were worse than brusque. Mrs. Poynton languidly ordered some fresh tea and turned her shoulder upon the new-comer. He had come without invitation upon an afternoon of some importance—he should entertain himself. There were limits to her tolerance, obedient wife though she was.

So the conversation ebbed and flowed around him. Everyone followed their hostess's lead and made no attempt to draw him into it. Yet never was a casual visitor so little upset by the subtle but unmistakable rudeness of being ignored. He drank his tea absently, and notwithstanding his isolation, he made no movement to depart.

"Yet it was impossible to deny her beauty."

"My dear Eleanor," Lady Martyn whispered to her hostess, "what an extraordinary man! Is he a specimen of your country neighbours? I thought the people were quite decent round here."

Mrs. Poynton gently elevated her shoulders.

"Heaven only knows who or what he is!" she murmured. "We none of us like him except my husband, and you know how anything unusual attracts him."

"But where does he come from? Is he a neighbour?"

"His name is Lyndham, and he has taken a cottage a few miles away. No one seems to have an idea who or what he is, and he is

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most uncommunicative. He seems to spend most of his time walking in the grounds here and staring up at the house."

"A gentleman—but how uncouth!" Lady Martyn declared under her breath.

Mrs. Poynton looked sideways at him through the lace which drooped from her parasol. There was disparagement, but a certain amount of curiosity in her stealthy gaze. Mr. Lyndham wore old clothes, his beard was ill-trimmed, his necktie a subterfuge. But, after all, perhaps Lady Martyn was right. There was a certain air of breeding about the man, and his voice had the unmistakable quality which attracts. She lowered her parasol again.

"Why he comes here," she said softly—"especially whilst my husband is away—I cannot imagine. No one is civil to him, and he very seldom speaks to anybody. He asked Arthur for permission to walk in the grounds, and since then he seems to haunt the place. I met him one evening striding along the avenue and muttering to himself. I must have passed within a yard of him, and he took not the slightest notice. I was almost frightened to death."

"Your husband was always so good-natured," Lady Martyn yawned. "By the by, how about the lease?"

"Arthur has gone up to see the solicitors," Mrs. Poynton answered. "They do not seem to be able to get any reply from Sir Gervase. I don't think they even know where he is, and they have no power of attorney."

Lady Martyn looked across the terraced lawn to the long, ivy-covered front of the house.

"I hope you do not lose it," she said. "There isn't another place like it in the county. Isn't it almost time she came?"

Mrs. Poynton leaned forward in her chair.

"I believe," she said, "that I can hear the carriage."

From where they sat, the lower of three terraced lawns, cool with the quivering shade of dark cedar trees, one could see the long approach to the Abbey, a mile of straight white road leading through a parklike expanse of meadowland, yellow always at this time of the year with buttercups and clumps of marigolds. Mrs. Poynton rose to her feet, and there was as much excitement in her manner as a well-bred woman permits herself to entertain.

"The Princess is coming," she announced.

Only her unwelcome visitor sat still. Everyone else stood up to catch a glimpse of the victoria, now lainly visible. Mrs. Poynton glanced at this man, whom nobody liked, almost with aversion. He represented the one alien note in the little party of immaculately flannelled men, and women in all the glory of muslin gowns and flower-garlanded hats. He ought to have the good sense to go before the arrival of the Princess. He must understand that his appearance and strange humours were in ill accord with a gathering such as this. But Mr. Lyndham did not move. His arms were folded, his eyes were fixed on vacancy. He seemed to have passed into a world of his own creation—obviously a very rude thing to do. Apparently he was not even contemplating an early departure.

He had manners enough to rise, however, when the Princess, seeing them all gathered under the cedar-tree, stopped the carriage and came smiling across the lawn to them. A trifle grave-eyed, perhaps, and a little weary, she still justified easily the extravagant praises of a too personal Press. In her white lace dress and parasol, without a vestige of colour, her pallor seemed to speak of a fatigue not wholly physical. Yet it was impossible to deny her beauty.

In the midst of a little buzz of introductions, she found herself suddenly face to face with Lyndham, whom Mrs. Poynton had no idea at all of mentioning. In those few seconds of breathless silence which intervened before she held out her hand, there flashed backwards and forwards between the two, nameless things. She, if possible, was a little paler, and her admirable self-possession faltered. He, too, seemed to be struggling for self-control.

"I may be permitted to recall myself to your memory, Princess," he said, looking at her steadily. "My name is Lyndham—Richard Lyndham. May I hope that I am not quite forgotten?"

She held out her hand.

"One does not forget one's oldest friends," she said softly. "I am very glad to see you again, Mr. Lyndham."

Her hostess led her away. The Princess of Berlitz was a personage, even if her husband's estates had lain far away in a corner of Austria; and the suite of rooms into which Mrs. Poynton herself conducted her had once been occupied by royalty. Tea and fruit were ready on a tiny table in the sitting-room. Beyond in the bedroom a couple of maids were already busy unpacking. Mrs. Poynton looked around, and the stream of idle words which had been passing between the two stopped.

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"I wonder," she said, "if there is anything else I can do for you?"

The Princess hesitated.

"Yes," she said, "there is something else. I should be so glad if I could speak for a few minutes with Mr. Lyndham up here."

Mrs. Poynton was taken aback. She stared blankly at her guest.

"With Mr. Lyndham?" she repeated vaguely.

The Princess bowed.

"Yes."

"Mr. Lyndham," she said, and unconsciously her voice took a new tone in addressing him, "the Princess desires to speak to you in her room. If you will come this way, I will show you where she is."

Mr. Lyndham rose slowly to his feet. He

"He took her hand and raised it to his lips."

Mrs. Poynton recovered herself, though she was still steeped in amazement.

"By all means," she said slowly. "I will send him up to you."

Mrs. Poynton returned to the garden. Mr. Lyndham was still there, sitting a little apart from the others. She went up to him.

did not appear surprised, but he showed no signs of eagerness.

"I will follow you," he said.

* * * * *

The door was safely closed. They were face to face. The Princess was in unfamiliar guise. Her eyes were full of tears, her

voice, as she stood there with outstretched hand, shook.

"Gervase!" she exclaimed, "at last I have found you, then! You cannot escape me now. Come!"

He took her hand and raised it to his lips. He was almost unrecognisable. All the hardness seemed to have passed from his strong, weather-tanned face. His eyes and voice were as soft as a child's.

"Dear Gabrielle!" he murmured. "You believe still? You have not lost your faith?"

"Never! Never for one moment!"

"Thank God! Even though it be you against the world."

They were silent for several moments. There was so much between them which seemed better expressed unspoken.

"You keep still—your borrowed name?"

"I have no other," he answered.

"Yet you are back in England—here, of all places in the world."

"And in this room," he added, with a dash of his old cynicism. "Nothing is stranger than that!"

She started away and looked around. Her dark eyes were full of the shadows of some reawakened fear.

"It is true!" she declared. "The whole place is altered and modernised out of recognition. I did not realise where I was."

He moved to the window.

"It was from here," he said, "that the shot was fired; and there were a dozen people ready to testify that no one save myself passed out from this room."

She held out her hand.

"Gervase!" she exclaimed suddenly, "you are here with an object!"

"And you?"

"Also with an object. Tell me, you received a letter?"

"I did! It brought me from Alaska."

"And me," she declared, "from Austria. Look!"

He glanced at it.

"The same as mine," he declared. "Heaven knows, it seems improbable enough! but dying men sometimes tell you truth."

He was busy already at the wall. With his knife he gashed recklessly at the new and expensive lincrusta walton. For several minutes he pushed and strained and knocked. At last with a little cry he succeeded. A hidden door swung back a few inches. With the poker for a lever he forced it open. The Princess looked over his shoulder eagerly. It was a mere closet of an apartment, dark and empty, save for a single shelf.

"After all," he said despondently, "there is nothing here to help us."

"But do you not see," she exclaimed, "one part of the mystery vanishes from this moment? This is where the man hid who fired the shot!"

He nodded.

"I was an idiot not to have thought of the place before," he said, "but I was told that it had been blocked up whilst I was at school. You are right. One part of the mystery vanishes. But the other remains."

She pointed to something upon the floor.

"What is that?" she asked. "A book?"

He stooped and picked it up—a dingy, faded volume, with the word "Diary" stamped upon it on the outer cover, the sort of thing which was the weakness of the last generation of schoolgirls. It was thick with dust and yellow with age. He opened it carelessly at the last page and bent forward to catch the light. Then he gave a little cry.

"What is it, Gervase?"

"Heaven only knows!" he muttered, and the hand which clutched the book shook as though an ague had seized him. "Read, Gabrielle! I cannot!"

She snatched it from him. Followed by him, she carried it out into the light.

* * * * *

The man whom nobody liked, the man who was Mrs. Poynton's *bête noire*, remained alone with the Princess in her sitting-room for nearly an hour. Meanwhile Mrs. Poynton and her guests talked. The more tolerant assumed an old friendship; others smiled. The Princess was of ancient family, but in the days before her fortunate marriage she had been poor. It was rumoured that she had been a governess. Who could tell what entanglements she might not have formed at that time? The Prince, who had been dead for little more than a year, had left her a wealthy woman. Her place in Society seemed assured. It was supposed that she was ambitious. She was indeed a splendid victim for the intelligent blackmailer. Mrs. Poynton grew weary of explaining how little she knew of Mr. Lyndham. He had come from nobody knew where. Arthur had taken a fancy to him, it was true, but she herself had mistrusted him from the first. Then there was a sudden hush. The Princess and Mr. Lyndham were coming down the steps and across the lawn.

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"'This,' she said, 'appears to be the diary of one Jules Letrange.'"

"Dear Mrs. Poynton," the Princess murmured, as she joined them, "my rooms are perfect. But one of them, I think, has a history. Is it true that Sir Knowles Philton was shot from the window of my sitting-room?"

Mrs. Poynton was a little perturbed.

"I am afraid that it is true," she admitted. "It is many years ago, however, and I thought that everyone would have forgotten. I hope you are not afraid of ghosts."

The Princess smiled brilliantly.

"Already," she confessed, "I have seen one."

There was a little murmur of amusement. Then everyone suddenly realised that she was in earnest. She had something to say to them.

"I want you to tell me something about that murder, Mrs. Poynton," the Princess said. "Sir Knowles was shot as he walked upon the terrace, was he not, by some unseen person? Was the mystery ever cleared up?"

Mrs. Poynton shook her head.

"Never positively," she answered. "Never in the courts, that is to say. Of course, all the evidence pointed to Gervase Philton, Knowles's brother; and although they never arrested him, he had to leave the country."

"Was there any quarrel between them, then?" the Princess asked.

"No open quarrel," Mrs. Poynton answered, "but it came out afterwards that there had been a great deal of ill-feeling for some time. Very fortunately for Gervase, no word of this transpired at the inquest."

"Dear me," the Princess murmured. "And the cause of the ill-feeling—was that ever known?"

Mrs. Poynton shrugged her shoulders.

"The one eternal cause. She was a governess to Lady Morrey's children—Lady Morrey was their sister, you know, and she was living here whilst her husband completed his term in India. They say that both brothers were in love with her, and Gervase was supposed to be horribly jealous."

There flashed between the Princess and Mr. Lyndham an illuminative glance which was a source of wonder to Mrs. Poynton.

"Anyhow," Mrs. Poynton continued, "one night Sir Knowles was shot as he walked upon the terrace, and the shot was fired from his brother's window. Some workmen were taking down a picture on the landing just outside, and they saw no one but Gervase himself come out of or enter his room. So, you see, as far as the negative evidence went, it was fairly conclusive. Gervase remained in England for several months; then he

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went abroad, and no one has ever heard of him since. We took the place a few months afterwards, and for my own part I can't help saying that I hope Sir Gervase never comes back. We could not possibly find another place to suit us so well."

The Princess smiled. Mr. Lyndham, wonderful to relate, followed suit.

"I am afraid that there is a disappointment in store for you, Mrs. Poynton," the Princess said. "Sir Gervase is back in England now. He is sitting by my side."

"Mr. Lyndham!" Mrs. Poynton screamed.

Mr. Lyndham bowed.

"I must apologise for being here under false pretences," he said, "but I had a very particular reason for desiring to pay a visit to this neighbourhood, and you can understand that I did not care to venture here under my own name. Eight years in the Colonies and a beard will do wonders for a man."

"Yet the Princess recognised you," Mrs. Poynton said.

"It is true," he admitted.

"I, too," the Princess remarked, "have an explanation to make. You have heard that I was a governess for two years before I married the Prince of Berlitz; but you perhaps did not know that I was a governess at this house, that it was on my account even that poor Sir Gervase here was accused of shooting his brother, who never spoke more than a civil word to me in his life."

A sudden silence fell upon the little group. After all, the evidence had been very strong. Yet they neither of them looked in the least like guilty people.

"Sir Gervase would rather, perhaps, that I told you what has happened—what we have discovered," the Princess said. "It is very simple, and the mystery which has baffled everyone so long does not exist any longer. Adjoining my sitting-room, from which the shot was fired, is a small secret closet, which apparently has not been opened for years. Some months ago we both of us received anonymous letters, dated from a hospital in Paris, advising us to explore this place. Hence Sir Gervase, hence my broken vow—for I had sworn never to set foot in England again. The closet appealed to us, as a likely hiding-place for the person who had fired the shot, but we have been fortunate to discover far more important things."

"You found something there?" one of the guests exclaimed.

"This," the Princess declared, holding up a little volume. "It is a sort of diary, and it is very eloquent. Is it your pleasure that I read aloud the last two extracts only?"

"This is very extraordinary," Mrs. Poynton murmured. "Yes, please do read anything which will elucidate the matter."

The Princess opened the book."

"This," she said, "appears to be the diary of one Jules Letrange, valet of the late Sir Knowles Philton. The first few pages are merely a highly sentimental and romantic account of his affection for a Mademoiselle de Caliste, which under the circumstances you will not expect me to read. He admits that he has not dared to betray himself in any way, he pleads guilty all the time to a most becoming doubt as to whether his suit would be in any way acceptable. He works his way through all the stages of frenzy, however, to madness, and he is evidently very near that state when this entry was written. You will observe that it was on the day of the murder.

"September 11th.—I cannot bear it any longer! If she is not for me, she is for no one. She favours Monsieur Gervase—a union impossible for her. Me she passes always by. I do not count with her. I am as the dust on which she treads. If she only knew that I have sworn it, perhaps she would not go out then to meet her lover, so blithe, so gay. If she is not for me, she is not for any other man. . . . If I see her with Monsieur Gervase again, it is the end. . . .

"Heaven help me! I tremble all the time! I am afraid! I have shot the wrong man. I have shot Sir Knowles, my master. I heard him cry out! If only I could get away from here! I hid till it was dark—no one suspects. It is all finished. To-morrow I may go. I leave this book. They speak of Monsieur Gervase. I will hide myself, and send word of this book if they arrest him. I . . ."

The Princess closed the little volume.

"The anonymous letters we both received were in the same handwriting. On my way through Paris I inquired at the hospital. The man is dead. He left no other confession. He left only this to tell his story."

Mrs. Poynton shut down her parasol with a snap.

"Really, it has been a most exciting afternoon. Only I am very much afraid now that I shall not get my lease renewed."

Sir Gervase and the Princess exchanged smiles. "That depends," he said, "upon the Princess."

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HIGHLAND GAMES.

By His Grace THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.*

MEN and women, lads and lasses, are wending their way to the field where the sound of the bagpipes shows that the Highland games have already begun. The bagpipe music begins first and finishes last on such occasions, for there are more pipers contending for victory than there are entries for the wrestling or dancing or hammer-throwing, or for any other of the competitions.

There is a group walking quickly and talking with a strong guttural and nasal twang combined—a language which is not English, or German, or French, though it has some sounds like French; nor is it Italian or Spanish. What, then, is it? The oldest language in the world, as you will be told by any enthusiastic Highlander—the most ancient of all tongues, Gaelic.

There are many Latin words in it; but, of course, the Romans borrowed all they could from the finest language of their day.

You hear another voice joining in and asking about the contestants in English, and the Gaelic-speaking group will drop their native tongue for a while to answer cautiously a query as to the probable winners.

"Well, I'll no be saying that Rob is no possible." "He is a good man whateffer," says another. "Cosh me!" says a third, "he's a fine man, him; but Jock's a fine man, too."

THE "HIGHLAND FLING" BEING PERFORMED AT A SCOTTISH GATHERING.

"Aye, a grand man at the 'Clach nearst'" (the stone of strength), says another. "He has an arm as round as a barrel. Man, he's heavy!"

"I'll no be saying but that he might win," broke in the first; so each gave his opinion with the utmost caution, speaking only with admiration of the favourite he chose, but without expressing any too confident belief, and never offering any wager. It is enough for them to see a good contest, and to get much excited if their man wins or loses.

"Cosh me!" they all say, when they hear of anything they do not expect: but "Cosh me!" does not mean "Lash me!" or anything of the kind. It is simply an expression of

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surprise; and they could not answer you if you asked them what was to happen to "me" if "me" were "coshed"—for nobody has ever found a meaning for the word. So you need not expect to get any now.

But the strange thing is that neither those who speak good English nor those who speak Gaelic are in the Highland dress. The crowd is just like any other crowd, except that you may see a Glengarry cap here and there. The

THROWING THE HAMMER.

national Highland dress is not prohibited, as it was in the days after the battle of Culloden. There would be little reason for doing this now. At that time the Highlander carried arms openly in his belt, or at his side, or secretly in his plaid. That was one of the main reasons for prohibiting the costume.

But now the commonest coat or jacket and waistcoat and trousers, even the ugly "billy-cock," the round, hard, felt, black hat with small brim and dome of ugliness, surmounts almost every head. Oh, the tyranny of fashion! and the love of doing as others do!

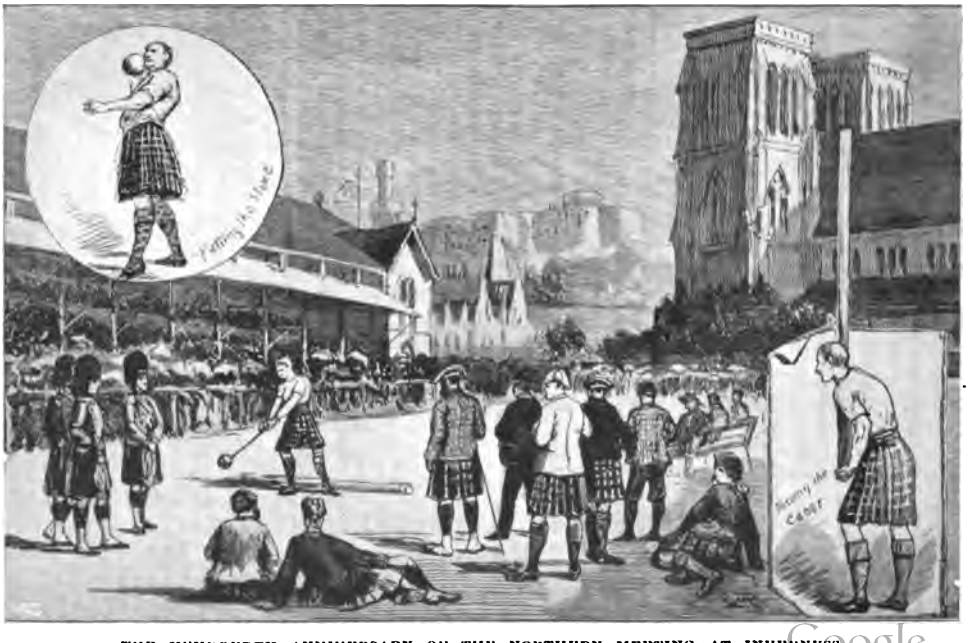
Few of these men and women now eat by preference the good oatmeal cakes of their ancestors, or even porritch. The white flour from America and the British biscuit have come into most houses instead. Alas for the old, picturesque ways!

But now we see a sight which seems to contradict all this; for a wail and then a "skirl," and then the sonorous nasal march played on the war-pipes, sound from afar; and the crowd is thick behind us, and kilted men are marching grandly along the high-way, with swing of sporran and plaid, and with bonnets on their heads, and bare knees surmounting gartered hose of all colours.

These are the competitors who have not gone to the ground before, as they had not to begin the pipe contests at once. Burly men they look as they swing forward and turn up a byway into the field.

Here a great crowd is lining the ropes. A knoll on one side affords standing-room for many to see, but the majority are content to watch from the barriers.

Before the part reserved for the judges is a platform which has already been taken possession of by the pipers, who are strutting, one by one, upon its boards. Sometimes the judges are placed in a tent with the opening away from the competitors, so that they may hear only, and not see.



THE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NORTHERN MEETING AT INVERNESS.

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FLINGING THE HAMMER AT THE BRAEMAR GAMES.

The metal of the hammer weighs 16 *lb., and the handle measures* 4 *ft.*

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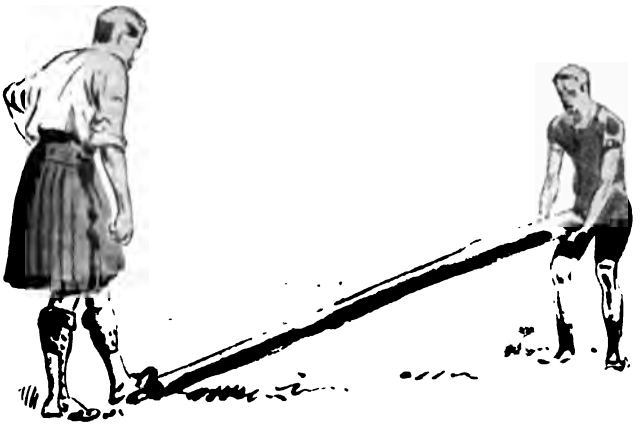
It is, indeed, difficult to determine which man is the best when first-rate players compete. It must be largely a matter of taste, but the majority out of three or five judges must decide. Earnestly they listen, or, when the dancing takes place, look on at the graceful movements of the reel and Highland fling, and, with note-book in hand, sit in a line, watching each minutest thing in gesture and step that may lead them to be critical of a fault.



GETTING THE CABER INTO POSITION.

The prettiest and most peculiar of all the dances is the "sword" dance. It is danced over swords called claymores, with large hilts of steel "basket"-work to cover the hand. It is an awkward thing to have so much hand cover, it may be said by the way, and officers in Highland regiments are fond of cutting away all the steel-work that is at the back of the wrist. The pattern is really an Italian mediæval one, and the true claymore was a two-handled sword with long blade of double edge, and had guards slanting from the handle forward.

This old sword must have been much more easy to dance over than is the sword called "Highland" now, for the handle, with its steel protection, is a bulky thing, and when the nimble feet cross and recross the blades, springing crosswise at every angle, the feet are too likely to touch the big handle-guard. When this happens, the dancer stops, for he knows that he has no chance of the prize.

The "steps" or paces with which he begins the dance are made with comparative slowness, but they quicken rapidly. The feet fly back and forward, the weight of the dancer's body being alternately placed on

HIGHLAND PIPERS AT PRACTICE.

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TOSSING THE CABER AT THE BRAEMAR GAMES.

The average length of a caber, which is usually made of larch, is 21 ft.

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them on each of the quarters of space made by the cross-blades. The quick music allows no pause in the rapidly revolving and springing figure—a pretty piece of activity — recalling the ancient days when personal prowess was all in all in a fight, and the man who could dance round his antagonist longest was the man who had most chance in a single combat.

Now we must look at other parts of the green enclosure, where the games known to all are in progress: the long and high leaping, the races, one of which is peculiar to hilly countries, for the runners must ascend steep places and thus prove the strength of their hearts.

The ground is rough and stony, the heather often long, and there may be a stream or ford, so that the trial is a severe one. Few of those who descend from this trial are able to shout for victory. The pace has told too much, and they are well content to lie down for a rest.

PIPE-MAJOR HENRY FRASER, OF THE SCOTS GUARDS, "SKIRLING" ON ST. ANDREW'S NIGHT AT THE ROYAL SCOTTISH CORPORATION BANQUET.

The hammer-throwing with a heavy and lighter weight are not novelties, nor is the wrestling, which is more a Saxon than a Celtic pastime. But the "putting" of the "Clach nearst" or the "stone of strength," is a very old Highland exercise.

The throw is from the back. The stone is poised on the right arm, as a German waiter carries a tray. The left foot is poised a moment from the ground, as the weight is on the right arm and leg. Then comes the spring, all the force being from the back of the arm, which, extended upward and forward, sends the stone of strength into the air, to fall at a spot which is immediately carefully marked by the judges. For this stone-throwing the man is stripped to his shirt and kilt, and may wear his foot-gear as he likes.

Now comes the most characteristic of all sports—the "tossing of the caber." This may have been practised from the earliest days, when the people of the country were called by the Romans "Caledonians." The name was a corruption of a Gaelic term for

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"woodmen." "Koile" is a phonetic spelling of the Gaelic for a wood, and "duine" is the Gaelic for men. "Koile-duine" suffers little if any change into Caledonian.

The sport is the sport of a woodland people. A young pine or other long piece of rough tree length is taken. It is grasped at one end—the lower—by both hands, holding it so that it rests almost upright against the man's shoulder. The man then lifts it and endeavours to throw it forward, so that its upper end shall strike the ground, and that the base which he holds shall pitch over and lie furthest from him.

If he fails, the end he has had in his hand will lie nearest to him, for he has not made it pitch over. It has fallen back towards him, and he retires disconsolate.

But usually all fail to make the big, heavy log describe a somersault, and then comes a sawyer and cuts off a piece, so as to make the next attempt one that is not beyond human strength. A roar of cheering greets the successful giant who pitches the pine log right over so that it falls clear and straight away from him.

Of course you have all seen an obstacle race. This is a development of a simple early practice of placing logs low near the ground, and then others alternately at some height, the combatants being obliged to go under the low and over the high rails at their utmost speed. This was an ancient sport of the Fenine, the old Irish warriors who followed the banner in days before anyone but Churchmen wrote history.

THE SWORD DANCE.

Most of these sports are held nowadays in the autumn, when tourists are visiting the land of Burns and Scott, of Wallace and Bruce. The prizes are not awarded until far on into the evening, and then all wend their way home by the late sunlight which makes the hills over the sea lochs and firths dark purple against a sky of gold.

The fine weather has tempted the Highland cattle, rough dun and russet, and black beasts to climb far up on the upper pastures. There is no sound from the sea, and the voices from tavern and the street of the little town by the shore sound clear in the mild, moist air.

There is talk to be heard among the elders who attend and watch the sports, of ancient tests of strength which are no longer in vogue. "Trundling the common shot" was one of these—an old three-pound or six-pound shot was hurled as far as possible, one good thrower being accustomed to swing his arm round at a pace that gave great impetus to the ball, a practice which would astonish a batsman if practised by a pitcher at baseball.

Another test was to lift a heavy stone to the top of a low wall. Another, to lift a great stone from the ground and let it drop when carried over the head, so that a man was obliged to leap forward to prevent it from hurting his back. Again, a peculiar feat was to kick a light stone so that it should be lifted by the foot and fall behind the athlete.

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"TOMMY" SHOWS APTITUDE FOR JOURNALISM.

By JEROME K. JEROME.*

"COME in!" said Peter Hope.

Peter Hope was tall and thin, clean-shaven but for a pair of side whiskers close-cropped and terminating just below the ear, with hair of the kind referred to by sympathetic barbers as "getting a little thin on the top, sir," but arranged with economy, that everywhere is poverty's true helpmate. About Mr. Peter Hope's linen, which was white though somewhat frayed, there was a self-assertiveness that invariably arrested the attention of even the most casual observer. Decidedly there was too much of it—its ostentation aided and abetted by the retiring nature of the cut-away coat, whose aim and object clearly was to slip off and disappear behind its owner's back. "I'm a poor old thing," it seemed to say. "I don't shine—or, rather, I shine too much among these up-to-date young modes. I only hamper you. You would be much more comfortable without me." To persuade it to accompany him, its proprietor had to employ force, keeping fastened the lowest of its three buttons. At every step it struggled for its liberty. Another characteristic of Peter's, linking him to the past, was his black silk cravat, secured by a couple of gold pins chained together. Watching him as he now sat writing, his long legs encased in tightly strapped grey trouscring crossed beneath the table, the lamplight falling on his fresh-complexioned face, upon the shapely hand that steadied the half-written sheet, a stranger might have rubbed his eyes, wondering by what hallucination he thus found himself in presence seemingly of some young beau belonging to the early 'forties; but looking closer, would have seen the many wrinkles.

"Come in!" repeated Mr. Peter Hope, raising his voice, but not his eyes.

The door opened, and a small, white face, out of which gleamed a pair of bright, black eyes, was thrust sideways into the room.

"Come in!" repeated Mr. Peter Hope for the third time. "Who is it?"

A hand not over clean, grasping a greasy cloth cap, appeared below the face.

"Not ready yet," said Mr. Hope. "Sit down and wait."

The door opened wider, and the whole of the figure slid in and, closing the door behind it, sat itself down upon the extreme edge of the chair nearest.

"Which are you—*Central News* or *Courier?*" demanded Mr. Peter Hope, but without looking up from his work.

The bright, black eyes, which had just commenced an examination of the room by a careful scrutiny of the smoke-grimed ceiling, descended and fixed themselves upon the one clearly defined bald patch upon his head that, had he been aware of it, would have troubled Mr. Peter Hope. But the full, red lips beneath the turned-up nose remained motionless.

That he had received no answer to his question appeared to have escaped the attention of Mr. Peter Hope. The thin, white hand moved steadily to and fro across the paper. Three more sheets were added to those upon the floor. Then Mr. Peter Hope pushed back his chair and turned his gaze for the first time upon his visitor.

To Peter Hope, hack journalist, long familiar with the genus Printer's Devil, small white faces, tangled hair, dirty hands, and greasy caps were common objects in the neighbourhood of that buried rivulet, the Fleet. But this was a new species. Peter Hope sought his spectacles, found them after some trouble under a heap of newspapers, adjusted them upon his high, arched nose, leant forward, and looked long and up and down.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Peter Hope. "What is it?"

The figure rose to its full height of five foot one and came forward slowly.

Over a tight-fitting garibaldi of blue silk, excessively *décolleté*, it wore what once had been a boy's pepper-and-salt jacket. A worsted comforter wound round the neck still left a wide expanse of throat showing above the garibaldi. Below the jacket fell a long, black skirt, the train of which had been looped up about the waist and fastened with a cricket-belt.

"Who are you? What do you want?" asked Mr. Peter Hope.

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For answer, the figure, passing the greasy cap into its other hand, stooped down and, seizing the front of the long skirt, began to haul it up.

"Don't do that!" said Mr. Peter Hope. "I say, you know, you——"

But by this time the skirt had practically disappeared, leaving to view a pair of much-

"Mr. Peter Hope."

patched trousers, diving into the right-hand pocket of which the dirty hand drew forth a folded paper, which, having opened and smoothed out, it laid upon the desk.

Mr. Peter Hope pushed up his spectacles till they rested on his eyebrows, and read aloud — "'Steak and Kidney Pie, 4*d.*; Do. (large size), 6*d.*; Boiled mutton——'"

"That's where I've been for the last two weeks," said the figure — "Hammond's Eating House!"

The listener noted with surprise that the voice—though it told him, as plainly as if he had risen and drawn aside the red rep curtains, that outside in Gough Square the yellow fog lay like the ghost of a dead sea—betrayed no Cockney accent, found no difficulty with its aitches.

"You ask for Emma. She'll say a good word for me. She told me so."

"But, my good——" Mr. Peter Hope, checking himself, sought again the assistance of his glasses. The glasses being unable to decide the point, their owner had to put the question bluntly:

"Are you a boy or a girl?"

"I dunno."

"You don't know!"

"What's the difference?"

Mr. Peter Hope stood up, and taking the strange figure by the shoulders, turned it round slowly twice, apparently under the impression that the process might afford to him some clue. But it did not.

"What is your name?"

"Tommy."

"Tommy what?"

"Anything you like. I dunno. I've had so many of 'em."

"What do you want? What have you come for?"

"You're Mr. Hope—ain't you, second floor, 16, Gough Square?"

"That is my name."

"You want somebody to do for you?"

"You mean a housekeeper!"

"Didn't say anything about housekeeper Said you wanted somebody to do for you—cook and clean the place up. Heard 'em talking about it in the shop this afternoon. Old lady in green bonnet was asking Mother Hammond if she knew of anyone."

"Mrs. Postwhistle—yes, I did ask her to look out for someone for me. Why, do you know of anyone? Have you been sent by anybody?"

"You don't want anything too 'laborate in the way o' cooking? You was a simple old chap, so they said; not much trouble."

"No—no. I don't want much—someone clean and respectable. But why couldn't she come herself? Who is it?"

"Well, what's wrong about me?"

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Peter Hope.

"Why won't I do? I can make beds and clean rooms—all that sort o' thing. As for

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cooking, I've got a natural aptitude for it. You ask Emma; she'll tell you. You don't want nothing 'laborate?"

"Elizabeth," said Mr. Peter Hope, as he crossed and, taking up the poker, proceeded to stir the fire, "are we awake or asleep?"

Elizabeth, thus appealed to, raised herself on her hind legs and dug her claws into her master's thigh. Mr. Hope's trousers being thin, it was the most practical answer she could have given him.

"Done a lot of looking after other people for their benefit," continued "Tommy." "Don't see why I shouldn't do it for my own."

"My dear—I do wish I knew whether you were a boy or a girl. Do you seriously suggest that I should engage you as my housekeeper?" asked Mr. Peter Hope, now upright with his back to the fire.

"I'd do for you all right," persisted Tommy. "You give me my grub and a shake-down and, say, sixpence a week, and I'll grumble less than most of 'em."

"Don't be ridiculous," said Mr. Peter Hope.

"You won't try me?"

"Of course not; you must be mad."

"All right. No harm done." The dirty hand reached out towards the desk, and possessing itself again of "Hammond's Bill of Fare," commenced the operations necessary for bearing it away in safety.

"Here's a shilling for you," said Mr. Peter Hope.

"Rather not," said Tommy. "Thanks all the same."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Peter Hope.

"Rather not," repeated Tommy. "Never know where that sort of thing may lead you to."

"All right," said Mr. Peter Hope, replacing the coin in his pocket. "Don't!"

The figure moved towards the door.

"Wait a minute. Wait a minute," said Mr. Peter Hope irritably.

The figure, with its hand upon the door, stood still.

"Are you going back to Hammond's?"

"No. I've finished there. Only took me on for a couple o' weeks, while one of the gals was ill. She came back this morning."

"Who are your people?"

Tommy seemed puzzled. "What d'ye mean?"

"Well, whom do you live with?"

"Nobody."

"You've got nobody to look after you—to take care of you?"

"Take care of me! D'ye think **I'm** a bloomin' kid?"

"Then where are you going to now?"

"Going? Out."

Peter Hope's irritation was growing.

"Tommy."

"I mean, where are you going to sleep? Got any money for a lodging?"

"Yes, I've got some money," answered Tommy. "But I don't think much o' lodgings. Not a particular nice class as you meet there. I shall sleep out to-night. 'Tain't raining."

Elizabeth uttered a piercing cry.

"Serves you right!" growled Peter savagely. "How can anyone help treading on you when you will get just between one's legs. Told you of it a hundred times."

The truth of the matter was that Peter was becoming very angry with himself. For no reason whatever, as he told himself, his memory would persist in wandering to Ilford Cemetery, in a certain desolate corner of which lay a fragile little woman whose lungs had been but ill adapted to breathing

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London fogs; with, on the top of her, a still smaller and still more fragile mite of humanity that, in compliment to its only relative worth, a penny piece, had been christened Thomas—a name common enough in all conscience, as Peter had reminded himself more than once. In the name of common-sense, what had dead and buried Tommy Hope to do with this affair? The whole thing was the veriest sentiment, and sentiment was Mr. Peter Hope's abomination. Had he not penned articles innumerable pointing out its baneful influence upon the age? Had he not always condemned it, wherever he had come across it, in play or book? Now and then the suspicion had crossed Peter's mind that in spite of all this, he was somewhat of a sentimentalist himself—things had suggested this to him. The fear had always made him savage.

"You wait here till I come back," he growled, seizing the astonished Tommy by the worsted comforter and spinning it into the centre of the room. "Sit down, and don't you dare to move." And Peter went out and slammed the door behind him.

"Bit off his chump, ain't he?" remarked Tommy to Elizabeth, as the sound of Peter's descending footsteps died away. People had a way of addressing remarks to Elizabeth. Something in her manner invited this.

"Oh, well, it's all in the day's work," commented Tommy cheerfully, and sat down as bid.

Five minutes passed, maybe ten. Then Peter returned, accompanied by a large, restful lady, to whom surprise—one felt it instinctively—had always been, and always would remain, an unknown quantity.

Tommy rose.

"That's the — the article," explained Peter.

Mrs. Postwhistle compressed her lips and slightly tossed her head. It was the attitude of not ill-natured contempt from which she regarded most human affairs.

"That's right," said Mrs. Postwhistle; "I remember seeing 'er there—leastways, it was an 'er right enough then. What 'ave you done with your clothes?"

"They weren't mine," explained Tommy. "They were things what Mrs. Hammond had lent me."

"Is that your own?" asked Mrs. Postwhistle, indicating the blue silk garibaldi.

"Yes."

"What went with it?"

"Tights. They were too far gone."

"What made you give up the tumbling business and go to Mrs. 'Ammond's?"

"It gave me up. Hurt myself."

"Who were you with last?"

"Martini troupe."

"And before that?"

"Oh! heaps of 'em."

"Nobody ever told you whether you was a boy or a girl?"

"Nobody as I'd care to believe. Some of them called me the one, some of them the other. It depended upon what was wanted."

"How old are you?"

"I dunno."

Mrs. Postwhistle turned to Peter, who was jingling keys. "Well, there's the bed upstairs. It's for you to decide."

"What I don't want to do," explained Peter, sinking his voice to a confidential whisper, "is to make a fool of myself."

"That's always a good rule," agreed Mrs. Postwhistle, "for those to whom it's possible."

"Anyhow," said Peter, "one night can't do any harm. To-morrow we can think what's to be done."

"To-morrow" had always been Peter's lucky day. At the mere mention of the magic date his spirits invariably rose. He now turned upon Tommy a countenance from which all hesitation was banished.

"Very well, Tommy," said Mr. Peter Hope, "you can sleep here to-night. Go with Mrs. Postwhistle, and she'll show you your room."

The black eyes shone.

"You're going to give me a trial?"

"We'll talk about all that to-morrow."

The black eyes clouded.

"Look here. I tell you straight, it ain't no good."

"What do you mean? What isn't any good?" demanded Peter.

"You'll want to send me to prison."

"To prison?"

"Oh, yes. You'll call it a school, I know. You ain't the first that's tried that on. It won't work." The bright, black eyes were flashing passionately. "I ain't done any harm. I'm willing to work. I can keep myself. I always have. What's it got to do with anybody else?"

Had the bright, black eyes retained their expression of passionate defiance, Peter Hope might have retained his common-sense. Only Fate arranged that instead they should suddenly fill with wild tears. And at sight of them Peter's common-sense went out of the room disgusted, and there was born the history of many things.

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"Don't be silly," said Peter. "You didn't understand. Of course I'm going to give you a trial. You're going to 'do' for me. I merely meant that we'd leave the details till to-morrow. Come, housekeepers don't cry."

The little wet face looked up.

"You mean it? Honour bright?"

"Honour bright. Now go and wash yourself. Then you shall get me my supper."

The odd figure, still heaving from its paroxysm of sobs, stood up.

"And I have my grub, my lodging, and sixpence a week?"

"Yes, yes; I think that's a fair arrangement," agreed Mr. Peter Hope, considering. "Don't you, Mrs. Postwhistle?"

"With a frock—or a suit of trousers—thrown in," suggested Mrs. Postwhistle. "It's generally done."

"If it's the custom, certainly," agreed Mr. Peter Hope. "Sixpence a week and clothes."

And this time it was Peter that, in company with Elizabeth, sat waiting the return of Tommy.

"I rather hope," said Peter, "it's a boy. It was the fogs, you know. If I only could have afforded to send him away!"

Elizabeth looked thoughtful. The door opened.

"Ah! that's better, much better," said Mr. Peter Hope. "'Pon my word, you look quite respectable."

By the practical Mrs. Postwhistle a working agreement, benefiting both parties, had been arrived at with the long-trained skirt; while an ample shawl arranged with judgment disguised the nakedness that lay below. Peter, a fastidious gentleman, observed with satisfaction that the hands, now clean, had been well cared for.

"Give me that cap," said Peter. He threw it in the glowing fire. It burned brightly, diffusing strange odours.

"There's a travelling cap of mine hanging up in the passage. You can wear that for the present. Take this half-sovereign and get me some cold meat and beer for supper. You'll find everything else you want in that sideboard or else in the kitchen. Don't ask me a hundred questions, and don't make a noise," and Peter went back to his work.

"Good idea, that half-sovereign," said Peter. "Shan't be bothered with 'Master Tommy' any more, don't expect. Starting a nursery at our time of life. Madness!"

Peter's pen scratched and spluttered. Elizabeth kept an eye upon the door.

"Quarter of an hour," said Peter, looking at his watch. "Told you so." The article on which Peter was now engaged appeared to be of a worrying nature.

"Then why," said Peter, "why did he refuse that shilling? Artfulness," concluded Peter, "pure artfulness. Elizabeth, old girl, we've got out of this business cheaply. Good idea, that half-sovereign." Peter gave vent to a chuckle that had the effect of alarming Elizabeth.

But luck evidently was not with Peter that night.

"Pingle's was sold out," explained Tommy, entering with parcels; "had to go to Bow's, in Farringdon Street."

"Oh!" said Peter, without looking up.

Tommy passed through into the little kitchen behind. Peter wrote on rapidly, making up for lost time.

"Good!" murmured Peter, smiling to himself, "that's a neat phrase. That ought to irritate them."

Now, as he wrote, while with noiseless footsteps Tommy, unseen behind him, moved to and fro and in and out the little kitchen, there came to Peter Hope this very curious experience: it felt to him as if for a long time he had been ill—so ill as not even to have been aware of it—and that now he was beginning to be himself again; consciousness of things returning to him. This solidly furnished, long, oak-panelled room, with its air of old-world dignity and repose—this sober, kindly room in which for more than half his life he had lived and worked—why had he forgotten it? It came forward greeting him with an amused smile, as of some old friend long parted from. The faded photos, in stiff, wooden frames upon the chimney-piece, among them that of the fragile little woman with the unadaptable lungs. "Bless my soul!" said Mr. Peter Hope, pushing back his chair. "It's thirty years ago. How time does fly! Why, let me see, I must be——"

"D'you like it with a head on it?" demanded Tommy, who had been waiting patiently for signs.

Peter shook himself awake and went to his supper.

A bright idea occurred to Peter in the night. "Of course; why didn't I think of it before? Settle the question at once," Peter fell into an easy sleep.

"Tommy——" said Peter, as he sat himself down to breakfast the next morning.

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"By the by," asked Peter with a puzzled expression, putting down his cup, "what is this?"

"Cauffee," informed him Tommy. "You said cauffee."

"Oh!" replied Peter. "For the future, Tommy, if you don't mind, I will take tea of a morning."

"All the same to me," explained the agreeable Tommy—"it's your breakfast."

"What I was about to say," continued Peter, "was that you're not looking very well, Tommy."

"I'm all right," asserted Tommy; "never nothing the matter with me."

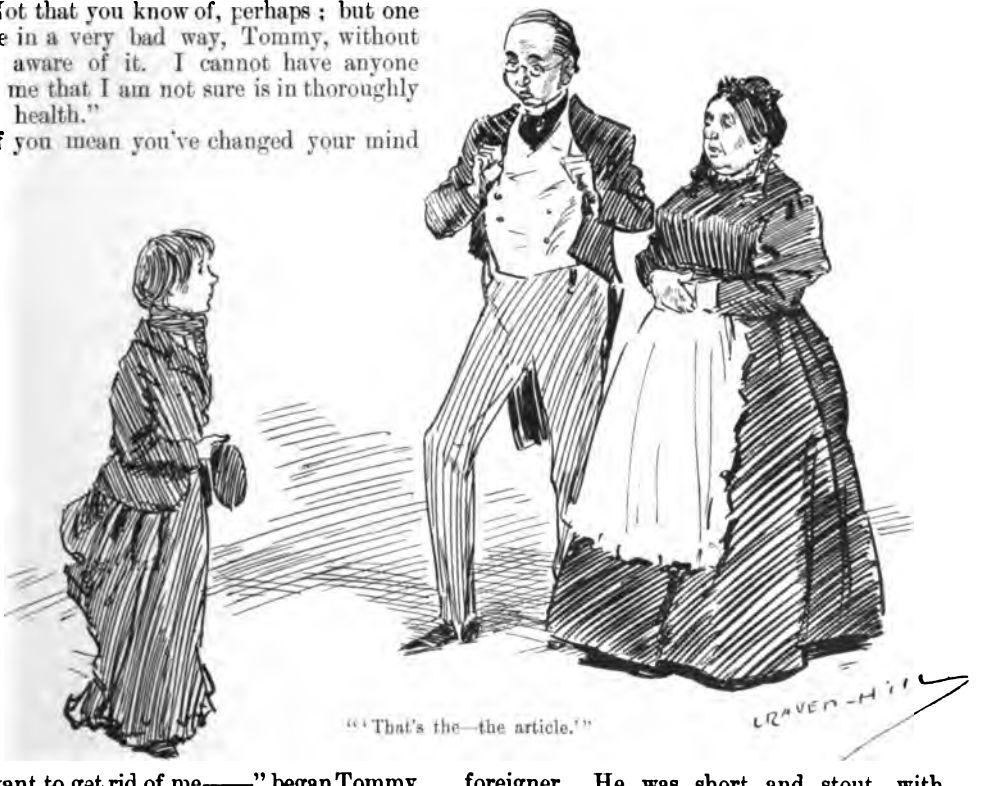
"Not that you know of, perhaps; but one can be in a very bad way, Tommy, without being aware of it. I cannot have anyone about me that I am not sure is in thoroughly sound health."

"If you mean you've changed your mind and want to get rid of me——" began Tommy, with its chin in the air.

"I don't want any of your uppishness," snapped Peter, who had wound himself up for the occasion to a degree of assertiveness that surprised even himself. "If you are a thoroughly strong and healthy person, as I think you are, I shall be very glad to retain your services. But upon that point I must be satisfied. It is the custom," explained Peter. "It is always done in good families. Run round to this address"—Peter wrote it upon a leaf of his notebook—"and ask Dr. Smith to come and see me before he begins his round. You go at once, and don't let us have any argument.

"That is the way to talk to that young person—clearly," said Peter to himself, listening to Tommy's footsteps dying down the stairs. Hearing the street-door slam, Peter stole into the kitchen and brewed himself a cup of coffee.

"Dr. Smith," who had commenced life as Herr Schmidt, but who in consequence of difference of opinion with his Government was now an Englishman with strong Tory prejudices, had but one sorrow: it was that strangers would mistake him for a foreigner. He was short and stout, with bushy eyebrows and a grey moustache, and looked so fierce that children cried when they saw him, until he patted them on the head and addressed them as "mein leedle frient" in a voice so soft and tender that they had to leave off howling just to wonder where it came from. He and Peter, who was a vehement Radical, had been cronies for many years, and had each an indulgent contempt for the other's understanding, tempered by a sincere affection for one another they would have found it difficult to account for.



"'That's the—the article.'"

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"What think you is de matter wid de leedle wench?" demanded Dr. Smith, Peter having opened the case. Peter glanced round the room. The kitchen door was closed.

"How do you know it's a wench?"

The eyes beneath the bushy brows grew rounder. "If it is not a wench, why dress it——"

"Haven't dressed it," interrupted Peter. "Just what I'm waiting to do—so soon as I know." And Peter recounted the events of the preceding evening.

Tears gathered in the doctor's small, round eyes. His absurd sentimentalism was the quality in his friend that most irritated Peter.

"Poor leedle waif!" murmured the soft-hearted old gentleman. "It was the good Providence that guided her—or him, whichever it be."

"Providence be hanged!" snarled Peter. "What was my Providence doing—landing me with a gutter-brat to look after?"

"So like you Radicals," sneered the doctor, "to despise a fellow human creature just because it may not have been born in purple and fine linen."

"I didn't send for you to argue politics," retorted Peter, controlling his indignation by an effort. "I want you to tell me whether it's a boy or a girl, so that I may know what to do with it."

"What mean you to do wid it?" inquired the doctor.

"I don't know," confessed Peter. "If it's a boy, as I rather think it is, maybe I'll be able to find it a place in one of the offices—after I've taught it a little civilisation."

"And if it be a girl?"

"How can it be a girl when it wears trousers?" demanded Peter. "Why anticipate difficulties?"

Peter, alone, paced to and fro the room, his hands behind his back, his ear on the alert to catch the slightest sound from above.

"I do hope it is a boy," said Peter, glancing up.

Peter's eyes rested on the photo of the fragile little woman gazing down at him from its stiff frame upon the chimney-piece. Thirty years ago, in this same room, Peter had paced to and fro, his hands behind his back, his ear alert to catch the slightest sound from above, had said to himself the same words.

"It's odd," mused Peter—"very odd indeed."

The door opened. The stout doctor, preceded at a little distance by his watch-chain, entered and closed the door behind him.

"'Mein leedle frient.'"

"A very healthy child," said the doctor; "as fine a child as anyone could wish to see. A girl."

The two old gentlemen looked at one another. Elizabeth, possibly relieved in her mind, began to purr.

"What am I to do with it?" demanded Peter.

"A very awkward position for you," agreed the sympathetic doctor.

"I was a fool!" declared Peter.

"You haf no one here to look after de leedle wench when you are away," pointed out the thoughtful doctor.

"And from what I've seen of the imp," added Peter, "it will want some looking after."

"I tink—I tink," said the helpful doctor, "I see a way out!"

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"What?"

The doctor thrust his fierce face forward and tapped knowingly with his right forefinger the right side of his round nose. "*I* will take charge of de leedle wench."

"You?"

"To me the case will not present the same difficulties. I haf a housekeeper."

"Oh, yes—Mrs. Whateley."

"She is a goot woman, when you know her," explained the doctor. "She only wants managing."

"Pooh!" ejaculated Peter.

"Why do you say that?" inquired the doctor.

"You! bringing up a headstrong girl. The idea!"

"I should be kind, but firm."

"You don't know her."

"How long haf you known her?"

"Anyhow, I'm not a soft-hearted sentimentalist; that would just ruin the child."

"Girls are not boys," persisted the doctor; "they want different treatment."

"Well, I'm not a brute!" snarled Peter. "Besides, suppose she turns out rubbish? What do you know about her?"

"I take my chance," agreed the generous doctor.

"It wouldn't be fair," retorted honest Peter.

"Tink it over," said the doctor. "A place is never home without de leedle feet. We Englishmen love the home. You are different. You haf no sentiment."

"I cannot help feeling," explained Peter, "a sense of duty in this matter. The child came to me. It is as if this thing had been laid upon me."

"If you look upon it that way, Peter," sighed the doctor.

"With sentiment," went on Peter, "I have nothing to do; but duty—duty is quite another thing." Peter, feeling himself an ancient Roman, thanked the doctor and shook hands with him.

Tommy, summoned, appeared.

"The doctor, Tommy," said Peter, without looking up from his writing, "gives a very satisfactory account of you. So you can stop."

"Told you so," returned Tommy. "Might have saved your money."

"But we shall have to find you another name."

"What for?"

"If you are to be a housekeeper, you must be a girl."

"Don't like girls."

"Can't say I think much of them myself, Tommy. We must make the best of it. To begin with, we must get you proper clothes."

"Hate skirts. They hamper you."

"Tommy," said Peter severely, "don't argue."

"Pointing out facts ain't arguing," argued Tommy. "They do hamper you. You try 'em."

The clothes were quickly made, and after a while they came to fit; but the name proved more difficult of adjustment. A sweet-faced, laughing lady, known to fame by a title respectable and orthodox, appears an honoured guest to-day at many a literary gathering. But the old fellows, pressing round, still call her "Tommy."

The week's trial came to an end. Peter, whose digestion was delicate, had had a happy thought.

"What I propose, Tommy—I mean Jane," said Peter, "is that we should get in a woman to do just the mere cooking. That will give you more time to—to attend to other things, Tommy—Jane, I mean."

"What other things?" chin in the air.

"The—the keeping of the rooms in order, Tommy. The—the dusting."

"Don't want twenty-four hours a day to dust four rooms."

"Then there are messages, Tommy. It would be a great advantage to me to have someone I could send on a message without feeling I was interfering with the housework."

"What are you driving at?" demanded Tommy. "Why, I don't have half enough to do as it is. I can do all——"

Peter put his foot down. "When I say a thing, I mean a thing. The sooner you understand that, the better. How dare you argue with me! Fiddle-de-dee!" For two pins Peter would have employed an expletive even stronger, so determined was he feeling.

Tommy without another word left the room. Peter looked at Elizabeth and winked.

Poor Peter! his triumph was short-lived. Five minutes later, Tommy returned, clad in the long, black skirt, supported by the cricket belt, the blue garibaldi cut *décolleté*, the pepper-and-salt jacket, the worsted comforter, the red lips very tightly pressed, the long lashes over the black eyes moving very rapidly.

"Tommy" (severely), "what is this tomfoolery?"

"I understand. I ain't no good to you. Thanks for giving me a trial. My fault."

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"Tommy" (less severely), "don't be an idiot."

"Ain't an idiot. 'Twas Emma. Told me I was good at cooking. Said I'd got an aptitude for it. She meant well."

"Tommy" (no trace of severity), "sit down. Emma was quite right. Your cooking is—is promising. As Emma puts it, you have aptitude. Your—your perseverance, your hopefulness proves it."

"Then why d'ye want to get someone else in to do it?"

If Peter could have answered truthfully! If Peter could have replied—

"My dear, I am a lonely old gentleman. I did not know it until—until the other day. Now I cannot forget it again. Wife and child died many years ago. I was poor, or I might have saved them. That made me hard. The clock of my life stood still. I hid away the key. I did not want to think. You crept to me out of the cruel fog, awakened old dreams. Do not go away any more"—perhaps Tommy, in spite of her fierce independence, would have consented to be useful; and thus Peter might have gained his end at less cost of indigestion. But the penalty for being an anti-sentimentalist is that you must not talk like this even to yourself. So Peter had to cast about for other methods.

"Why shouldn't I keep two servants if I like?" It did seem hard on the old gentleman.

"What's the sense of paying two to do the work of one? You would only be keeping me on out of charity." The black eyes flashed. "I ain't a beggar."

"And you really think, Tommy—I should say Jane—you can manage the—the whole of it? You won't mind being sent on a message, perhaps in the very middle of your cooking. It was that I was thinking of, Tommy—some cooks would."

"You go easy," advised him Tommy, "till I complain of having too much to do."

Peter returned to his desk. Elizabeth looked up. It seemed to Peter that Elizabeth winked.

The fortnight that followed was a period of trouble to Peter, for Tommy, her suspicions having been aroused, was sceptical of "business" demanding that Peter should dine with this man at the club, lunch with this editor at the "Cheshire Cheese." At once the chin would go up into the air, the black eyes cloud threateningly. Peter, an unmarried man for thirty years, lacking experience, would under cross-examination contradict himself, become confused, break down over essential points.

"Really," grumbled Peter to himself one evening, sawing at a mutton chop, "really, there's no other word for it—I'm henpecked."

Peter that day had looked forward to a little dinner at a favourite restaurant, with his "dear old friend Blenkinsopp, a bit of a gourmet, Tommy—that means a man who likes what you would call elaborate cooking!"—forgetful at the moment that he had used up "Blenkinsopp" three days before for a farewell supper, "Blenkinsopp" having to set out the next morning for Egypt. Peter was not facile at invention. Names in particular had always been a difficulty to him.

"I like a spirit of independence," continued Peter to himself. "Wish she hadn't quite so much of it. Wonder where she got it from."

The situation was becoming more serious to Peter than he cared to admit. For day by day, in spite of her tyrannies, Tommy was growing more and more indispensable to Peter. Tommy was the first audience that for thirty years had laughed at Peter's jokes; Tommy was the first public that for thirty years had been convinced that Peter was the most brilliant journalist in Fleet Street; Tommy was the first anxiety that for thirty years had rendered it needful that Peter each night should mount stealthily the creaking stairs, steal with shaded candle to a bedside. If only Tommy wouldn't "do" for him! If only she could be persuaded to "do" something else.

Another happy thought occurred to Peter.

"Tommy—I mean Jane," said Peter, "I know what I'll do with you."

"What's the game now?"

"I'll make a journalist of you."

"Don't talk rot."

"It isn't rot. Besides, I won't have you answer me like that. As a Devil—that means, Tommy, the unseen person in the background that helps a journalist to do his work—you would be invaluable to me. It would pay me, Tommy—pay me very handsomely. I should make money out of you."

This appeared to be an argument that Tommy understood. Peter, with secret delight, noticed that the chin retained its normal level.

"I did help a chap to sell papers, once," remembered Tommy; "he said I was fly at it."

"I told you so," exclaimed Peter triumphantly. "The methods are different, but the instinct required is the same. We will

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get a woman in to relieve you of the housework."

The chin shot up into the air.

"I could do it in my spare time."

"You see, Tommy, I should want you to go about with me—to be always with me."

"'That's his shake-down, ain't it?'"

"Better try me first. Maybe you're making an error."

Peter was learning the wisdom of the serpent.

"Quite right, Tommy. We will first see what you can do. Perhaps, after all, it may turn out that you are better as a cook." In his heart Peter doubted this.

But the seed had fallen upon good ground. It was Tommy herself that manœuvred her first essay in journalism. A great man had come to London—was staying in apartments especially prepared for him in St. James's Palace. Said every journalist in London to himself: "If I could obtain an interview with this Big Man, what a big thing it would be for me!" For a week past, Peter had carried everywhere about with him a paper headed: "Interview of Our Special Correspondent with Prince Blank," questions down left-hand column, very narrow; space for answers right-hand side, very wide. But the Big Man was experienced.

"I wonder," said Peter, spreading the neatly folded paper on the desk before him, "I wonder if there can be any way of getting at him—any dodge or trick, any piece of low cunning, any plausible lie that I haven't thought of."

"Old Man Martin—called himself Martini—was just such another," commented Tommy. "Come pay time, Saturday afternoon, you just couldn't get at him—simply wasn't any way. I was a bit too good for him once, though," remembered Tommy, with a touch of pride in her voice; "got half a quid out of him that time. It did surprise him."

"No," communed Peter to himself aloud, "I don't honestly think there can be any method, creditable or discreditable, that I haven't tried." Peter flung the one-sided interview into the waste-paper basket, and slipping his notebook into his pocket, departed to drink tea with a lady novelist, whose great desire, as stated in a postscript to her invitation, was to avoid publicity, if possible.

Tommy, as soon as Peter's back was turned, fished it out again.

An hour later in the fog around St. James's Palace stood an Imp, clad in patched trousers and a pepper-and-salt jacket turned up about the neck, gazing with admiring eyes upon the sentry.

"Now, then, young seventeen-and-sixpence

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the soot," said the sentry, "what do you want?"

"Makes you a bit anxious, don't it," suggested the Imp, "having a big pot like him to look after?"

"Does get a bit on yer mind, if yer thinks about it," agreed the sentry.

"How do you find him to talk to, like?"

"Well," said the sentry, bringing his right leg into action for the purpose of relieving his left, "ain't 'ad much to do with 'im myself, not person'ly, as yet. Oh, 'e ain't a bad sort when yer know 'im."

"That's his shake-down, ain't it?" asked the Imp, "where the lights are."

"That's it," admitted the sentry. "You ain't an Anarchist? Tell me if you are."

"I'll let you know if I feel it coming on," the Imp assured him.

Had the sentry been a man of swift and penetrating observation—which he wasn't—he might have asked the question in more serious a tone. For he would have remarked that the Imp's black eyes were resting lovingly upon a rainwater-pipe, giving to a skilful climber easy access to the terrace underneath the Prince's windows.

"I would like to see him," said the Imp.

"Friend o' yours?" asked the sentry.

"Well, not exactly," admitted the Imp. "But there, you know, everybody's talking about him down our street."

"Well, yer'll 'ave to be quick about it," said the sentry. "'E's off to-night."

Tommy's face fell. "I thought it wasn't till Friday morning."

"Ah!" said the sentry, "that's what the papers say, is it?" The sentry's voice took unconsciously the accent of those from whom no secret is hid. "I'll tell yer what yer can do," continued the sentry, enjoying an unaccustomed sense of importance. The sentry glanced left, then right. "'E's a-slipping off all by 'imself down to Osborne by the 6.40 from Waterloo. Nobody knows it—'cept, o' course, just a few of us. That's 'is way all over. 'E just 'ates——"

A footstep sounded down the corridor. The sentry became statuesque.

At Waterloo, Tommy inspected the 6.40 train. Only one compartment indicated possibilities, an extra large one at the end of the coach next the guard's van. It was labelled "Reserved," and in place of the usual fittings was furnished with a table and four easy-chairs. Having noticed its position, Tommy took a walk up the platform and disappeared into the fog.

Twenty minutes later, Prince Blank stepped hurriedly across the platform, unnoticed save by half-a-dozen obsequious officials, and entered the compartment reserved for him. The obsequious officials bowed. Prince Blank, in military fashion, raised his hand. The 6.40 moved slowly forth.

Prince Blank, who was a stout gentleman, though he tried to disguise the fact, seldom found himself alone. When he did, he generally indulged himself in a little healthy relaxation. With two hours' run to Southampton before him, free from all possibility of intrusion, Prince Blank let loose the buttons of his powerfully built waistcoat, rested his bald head on the top of his chair, stretched his great legs upon another, and closed his terrible, small eyes.

For an instant it seemed to Prince Blank that a draught had entered into the carriage. As, however, the sensation immediately passed away, he did not trouble to wake up. Then the Prince dreamed that somebody was in the carriage with him—was sitting opposite to him. This being an annoying sort of dream, the Prince opened his eyes for the purpose of dispelling it. There was somebody sitting opposite to him—a very grimy little person, wiping blood off its face and hands with a dingy handkerchief. Had the Prince been a man capable of surprise, he would have been surprised.

"It's all right," assured him Tommy. "I ain't here to do any harm. I ain't an Anarchist."

The Prince, by a muscular effort, retired some four or five inches and commenced to rebutton his waistcoat.

"How did you get here?" asked the Prince.

"'Twas a bigger job than I'd reckoned on," admitted Tommy, seeking a dry inch in the smeared handkerchief, and finding none. "But that don't matter," added Tommy cheerfully, "now I'm here."

"If you do not wish me to hand you over to the police at Southampton, you had better answer my questions," remarked the Prince drily.

Tommy was not afraid of princes, but in the lexicon of her harassed youth "Police" had always been a word of dread.

"I wanted to get at you."

"I gather that."

"There didn't seem any other way. It's jolly difficult to get at you. You're so jolly artful."

"Tell me how you managed it."

"There's a little bridge for signals just outside Waterloo. I could see that the

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train would have to pass under it. So I climbed up and waited. It being a foggy night, you see, nobody twigged me. I say, you are Prince Blank, ain't you?"

"I am Prince Blank."

"Should have been mad if I'd landed the wrong man."

"Go on."

"I knew which was your carriage—leastways, I guessed it; and as it came along, I did a drop." Tommy spread out her arms and legs to illustrate the action. "The lamps, you know," explained Tommy, still dabbing at her face—"one of them caught me."

"And from the roof?"

"Oh, well, it was easy after that. There's an iron thing at the back, and steps. You've only got to walk downstairs and round the corner, and there you are. Bit of luck your other door not being locked. I hadn't thought of that. Haven't got such a thing as a handkerchief about you, have you?"

"Prince Blank rested his bald head on the top of his chair."

The Prince drew one from his sleeve and passed it to her. "You mean to tell me, boy——"

"Ain't a boy," explained Tommy. "I'm a girl!"

She said it sadly. Deeming her new friends such as could be trusted, Tommy had accepted the fact and was trying to get used to it. But for many a long year to come the thought of her lost manhood tinged her voice with bitterness.

"A girl!"

Tommy nodded her head.

"Umph!" said the Prince; "I have heard a good deal about the English girl. I was beginning to think it exaggerated. Stand up."

Tommy obeyed. It was not altogether her way, but with those eyes beneath their shaggy brows bent upon her, it seemed the simplest thing to do.

"So. And now that you are here, what do you want?"

"To interview you."

Tommy drew forth her list of questions.

The shaggy brows contracted.

"Who put you up to this absurdity? Who was it? Tell me at once?"

"Nobody."

"Don't lie to me. His name?"

The terrible, small eyes flashed fire. But Tommy also had a pair of eyes. Before their blaze of indignation the great man positively quailed. This type of opponent was new to him.

"I'm not lying."

"I beg your pardon," said the Prince.

And at this point it occurred to the Prince, who being really a great man, had naturally a sense of humour, that a conference conducted on these lines between the leading statesman of an Empire and an impertinent hussy of, say, twelve years old at the outside, might end by becoming ridiculous. So the Prince took up his chair and put it down again beside Tommy's, and employing skilfully his undoubted diplomatic gifts, drew from her, bit by bit, the whole story.

"I'm inclined, Miss Jane," said the Great Man, the story ended, "to agree with our friend Mr. Hope. I should say your *métier* was journalism."

"And you'll let me interview you?" asked Tommy, showing her white teeth.

The Great Man, laying a hand heavier than he guessed on Tommy's shoulder, rose. "I think you are entitled to it."

"What's your views," demanded Tommy, reading, "of the future political and social relationships——"

"Perhaps," suggested the Great Man, "it will be simpler if I write it myself."

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"Well," concurred Tommy, "my spelling is a bit rocky."

The Great Man drew a chair to the table.

"You won't miss out anything—will you?" insisted Tommy.

"I shall endeavour, Miss Jane, to give you no cause for complaint," gravely he assured her, and sat down to write.

Not till the train began to slacken speed had the Prince finished. Then, blotting and refolding the paper, he stood up.

"I have added some instructions on the back of the last page," explained the Prince, "to which you will draw Mr. Hope's particular attention. I would wish you to promise me, Miss Jane, never again to have recourse to dangerous acrobatic tricks, not even in the sacred cause of journalism."

"Of course, if you hadn't been so jolly difficult to get at——"

"My fault, I know," agreed the Prince. "There is not the least doubt as to which sex you belong to. Nevertheless, I want you to promise me. Come," urged the Prince, "I have done a good deal for you—more than you know."

"All right," consented Tommy a little sulkily. Tommy hated making promises, because she always kept them. "I promise."

"There is your Interview." The first Southampton platform lamp shone in upon the Prince and Tommy as they stood facing one another. The Prince, who had acquired the reputation, not altogether unjustly, of an ill-tempered and savage old gentleman, did a strange thing: taking the little, blood-smeared face between his paws, he kissed it. Tommy always remembered the smoky flavour of the bristly grey moustache.

"One thing more," said the Prince sternly—"not a word of all this. Don't open your mouth to speak of it till you are back in Gough Square."

"Do you take me for a mug?" answered Tommy.

They behaved very oddly to Tommy after the Prince had disappeared. Everybody took a deal of trouble for her, but none of them seemed to know why they were doing it. They looked at her and went away, and came again and looked at her. And the more they thought about it, the more puzzled they became. Some of them asked her questions, but what Tommy really didn't know, added to what she didn't mean to tell, was so prodigious that Curiosity itself paled at contemplation of it.

They washed and brushed her up and gave her an excellent supper; and putting her into a first-class compartment labelled "Reserved," sent her back to Waterloo, and thence in a cab to Gough Square, where she arrived about midnight, suffering from a sense of self-importance, traces of which to this day are still discernible.

Such and thus was the commencement of Tommy's journalistic career, leading to many histories still famous in the annals of Bohemia which stretches east and west from St. Bride's Street to the confines of Soho, which is bordered on the north by Bloomsbury and reaches south to the great water. Some of them, maybe, are worth telling: How Peter realised the great dream of his life and founded that short-lived but long-remembered periodical *Good Humour*, of which Tommy was sub-editor, and William Clodd, Esq.—but that, of course, was long ago, before he was Sir William Clodd, M.P., "Truthful Billy" as we called him then—the business manager and advertising agent; how Dandy Danvers danced at Court; how Mary Ramsbotham, whom we had all thought so sensible, became for quite six months a handsome woman; how—but I run on. Some other day—perhaps.

BOYS AND GIRLS.

"I'M awful glad I'm not a girl,"
Said John,
"To wear a skirt and shake my curls,
And tie pink ribbons on.

"I'm awful glad I am a boy,"
Said John,
"To play football, be sensible,
And have a gun."

"Pshaw! I don't care," Belinda said,
"Maybe I'll wed an earl!
Besides, it's much more ladylike
To be a girl."

FLORENCE WILKINSON.

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"A FALLEN ANGEL." BY G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A.

THE ART OF MR. G. H. BOUGHTON R.A.

By John Oldcastle.

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WHEN you call on Mr. Boughton (pronounce the name as if it rhymed with "caught-on") at West House, on the summit of Campden Hill, part farmhouse and part palace—and call on him, too, to give you an account of the things he has done artistically well or ill—he asks you whether, on your threat to drown him in ink, you expect the Past will suddenly flash across the Present, to be yours in confession.

That verbal fencing betrayed the accomplished user of the foil, and I remembered the days when I used to take in *Harper's Magazine*, to read the "Rambles in Holland," and other papers contributed to its pages by Mr. Boughton's fugitive but never tripping pen. Mankind is easily divided into the men who cannot express themselves and the men who can; and among those who can, Mr. Boughton is a front-ranker.

Born near Norwich, he did not leave England for America until he was two years old. His father, though an Englishman, was really an American to the manner born, loving the Puritans whose heroes and heroines his son was afterwards to depict, and being as natural a Republican as even that arch-Royalist, Chateaubriand, admitted himself to be in his moments of elation. He took out to the wilds with him agricultural implements—other than spades, one supposes—which were of no use. Very early in his life his son began to think of implements of another sort—palette, paint-box, and brushes—and these were of all possible use.

"I can't recollect the time when I did not draw a little," the painter tells you. "I could draw the capital letters of the alphabet before I could spell"—a confession over which Ruskin would have clapped his hands in the glee that so well became him before illness darkened his vision; for Ruskin held

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"MILTON'S FIRST LOVE." BY G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A.

that it was more important that a child should learn to draw than that he should learn to read or write.

Great things come about very simply; and an accident that befell the boy Boughton made an artist of him. "He may not read, he may not write," said the doctor. "But may he draw?" asked the sister on the spot. "Can he?" was the doctor's counter-question. The boy's sketches were produced; and the doctor was in effect his first friend and patron. He went to stay with some friends in the country, and there met a lady who, in return for alert service rendered, became his second patron and put a box at the opera at his disposal. The painter, to whom prosperity has come in full measure, thinks affectionately of those early helpers of his in the days that were still anxious.

Another millionaire friend came along. "Don't you think you should go to Europe?" he asked, after seeing some of the young

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"IZAAK WALTON AND THE MILKMAIDS." BY G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A.
From the picture in the possession of C. Stewart Smith, Esq., New York.

artist's work. "That is what I have been saving for," said the potential Royal Academician; "but I happen to be about £200 short." "Here's a cheque for the amount; paint me two pictures for it when you are away," said the millionaire, who was accounted "close" by the world. Mr. Boughton, one perceives, does not join in that absurd hue and cry against the Patron with which Chelsea has resounded ere now; he is not to that extreme Whistlerian. These early episodes were the turning-points in Mr. Boughton's career. Opportunity came to him, as it comes to most of the young, and he closed with it.

That visit to Europe restored Mr. Boughton to England. In London he looked at pictures. The Cumberland lakes and the Scottish lochs found him subjects for sketching: and in Ireland the peasants sat to an artist

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who had tact enough to introduce himself to the priest. Then, intractable to others, they were model models to Mr. Boughton. The tact which has distinguished his art has distinguished his life—that is to say, he is sincere as artist and as man. And tact has helped him to get near to the peasant—nearer than George Mason or Fred Walker got to him—not here only, but in Holland and in Brittany. You may be sure that if Mr. Boughton had been shown in a temple of the East a light that had been kept burning with pious symbolism for a thousand years, he would not have blown it out. Nor was he one of those two artists of ours who, passing through a Breton district, sat at the foot of a wayside shrine to lunch and to smoke; and who, seeing a bird settle on an arm of the cross, threw stones at it—missing the bird, but chipping the cross. Children, looking on, reported the deed to their parents, and the sequel was—angry peasants armed with pitchforks, and two British artists in full flight. One can understand why the Bretons wanted to stone those artists; not why those artists wanted to stone the bird. Mr. Boughton, the friend of man and beast,

"MISS OLIVE HOOD." BY G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A.
From the portrait in the possession of Miss Hood.

has been recognised as such by man and beast alike. Each, as by common instinct, recognises his friend. The Dutch peasant, stubborn to others, has yielded to Mr. Boughton; and the fierce sheep-dog of the North, that bounds forward with a bark, is seen transformed to a creature offering welcome with a wagging tail.

The ticket of the steamship that was to take the painter back to America was in his

MR. G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A.
From a drawing by Sir L. Alma Tadema.
By permission of Messrs. Harper Brothers.

pocket. Then he walked down Regent Street, and met a friend fresh from New York. "Say, you ought to try your luck here," was the friend's advice, after seeing his work. So Mr. Boughton sold his ticket. He also sold the pictures he had in hand. One of them was hung at the British Institution; and the *Times* made it a big bow, from the very head of its column. Next morning the dealers were sitting on his doorstep; and, as all the world knows, they have metaphorically sat there ever since. They find it, no doubt, a remarkably profitable position.

The crime of being "literary" in art (if a "crime" it is to be called) has been boldly committed by Mr. Boughton, so that his name stands with the household names of Hawthorne and Longfellow. He is the painter of "The March of Miles Standish," of "Hester Prynne," and of "A Chapter from Pamela," and Literature, nothing loth in gratitude, has made her return by the pen of Henry James. "He has been perceptibly an inventor," says Mr. James, "calling into being certain types of dress, certain tones

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"WHEN THE DEAD LEAVES FALL." BY G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A.
From the picture in the Municipal Gallery, Rome, bought by the King of Italy.

and associations of colour, which people are hungry for when they acquire 'a Boughton,' and which they can obtain on no other terms. This pictorial element in which he moves is made up of divers delicate things, and there would be roughness in attempting to unravel the tapestry. There is old English, old American, and old Dutch in it,

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"GOLDEN AFTERNOON: THE ISLE OF WIGHT." BY G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A.

From the picture in the Metropolitan Museum, New York.

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"A DUTCH FERRY." BY G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A

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"HESTER PRYNNE, IN HAWTHORNE'S 'THE SCARLET LETTER.'"
BY G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A.

and a friendly, unexpected new Dutch, too—an ingredient of New Amsterdam, a strain of Knickerbocker and of Washington Irving." Then Mr. Henry James seems to breathe just the ghost of a sigh over Mr. Boughton for being distracted from landscape painting by his importunate love of sad-faced, pretty women in close-fitting coifs and old silver-clasped cloaks. "And indeed," he owns, "though Mr. Boughton's figures are very tender, his landscape is, to my sense, tenderer still. There is a delightful ambiguity of period and even of clime in him, and he rejoices in that inability to depict the modern, which is the most convincing sign of the contemporary."

In one of his literary essays, Mr. Boughton describes the delight of a summer morning, so full of all amity that he could not feel in any humour to "kill or maim anything or anybody." He would not even "accept the loan of a most lithesome rod and a gaudy book of flies that looked almost as 'fetching' as a brand-new box of moist colours to a giddy art-student." But the author of "The Compleat Angler," who also knew what it was to be lifted above earth, found in Mr. Boughton an illustrator. His "Izaak Walton and the Milkmaids" shows more consideration to the angler than some of the old woodcuts showed in which the second fisherman of the piece,

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"THE VISION AT THE MARTYR'S WELL." BY G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A.

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romantically young and languishing, is faithfully introduced, a set-off to the milkmaid's mother. "'Twas a handsome milkmaid," says "The Compleat Angler" in a memorable passage, "that had not yet attained so much age and wisdom as to load her mind with any fears of many things that will never be, as too many men too often do." Maudlin sang "like a nightingale," one

painting of a young and beautiful woman clad in a melancholy robe and veil, and beset by a drift of leaves—"When the Dead Leaves Fall." The flight of the foliage, so well described by Dickens as having a "dead lightness"—a more helpless thing than a dead weight—is admirably rendered in the picture. To the face the painter has given the pathos of ephemeral beauty—beauty that does not

"BE THOU AS CHASTE AS ICE, AS PURE AS SNOW, THOU SHALT NOT ESCAPE CALUMNY."—*Hamlet.*
BY G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A.

remembers, and that the words "suited" the "smooth" song. They were the words—

"Come live with me and be my love,"

which Kit Marlowe had written at least fifty years earlier, and to which her mother sang the reply made by Sir Walter Raleigh in his younger days. "Old-fashioned poetry," Isaac calls it; but "much better," he thinks, "than the tiring lines that are now in fashion in this critical age."

Autumn and Winter were wont to be typified by ageing and aged figures, but Mr. Boughton has a more modern touch in his

need any suggestion of disease to assure us of its transitoriness; disease hardly makes youth more transient than it is made by health and happiness. Malady may speak the sentence, but youth is anyhow condemned.

Among many pictures of New England in which the beauty, courage, steadfastness, and virtue of Puritan life are illustrated occurs the darker episode of the young girl "Suspected of Witchcraft" because she has a fancy for walking in the woods and gathering flowers. The presence of a black cat adds the final and damning confirmation

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"THE ROAD TO CAMELOT: FROM 'THE LADY OF SHALOTT.'" BY G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A.

From the picture in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, reproduced by permission of the Liverpool Corporation.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:

There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad
An Abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot.

And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.—*Tennyson.*

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"SUSPECTED OF WITCHCRAFT." BY G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A.

of her crime. In one of her less known (and much better) books, Mrs. Beecher Stowe has a New England countrywoman who is quite unaware of flowers as Nature's decoration of the fields, but recognises them as in some cases curative. She calls them "blows," and makes medicinal "tea" of those that are worthy. Perhaps the suspected maid of the picture is guilty of nothing more heinous than a love of flowers.

The "Knickerbocker History of New York" phase yielded Mr. Boughton the delightful subject of the reception the citizens accorded to the prohibition of

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"A WINTER'S WALK BY THE SEA." BY G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A.

smoking issued by a too ascetic Governor. The smoke of pipes here settled a dispute with quite as much finality as belongs to the smoke of cannon; and these pipes, while being pipes of rebellion, did not fail, one is sure from the expression on the faces of some of the smokers, to be also pipes of peace. The contest ended, and most satisfactorily this time, in smoke. From comedy to tragedy we pass with Mr. Boughton when we turn to the "Hester Prynne," a harrowing passage in the life of Hawthorne's penitent heroine. The ground is covered with snow—the snow that, according to the conceit of a poet, made the earth innocent for the coming of the Saviour; pestilence is in the air: and a flourishing mother and child, muffling their breaths against infection,

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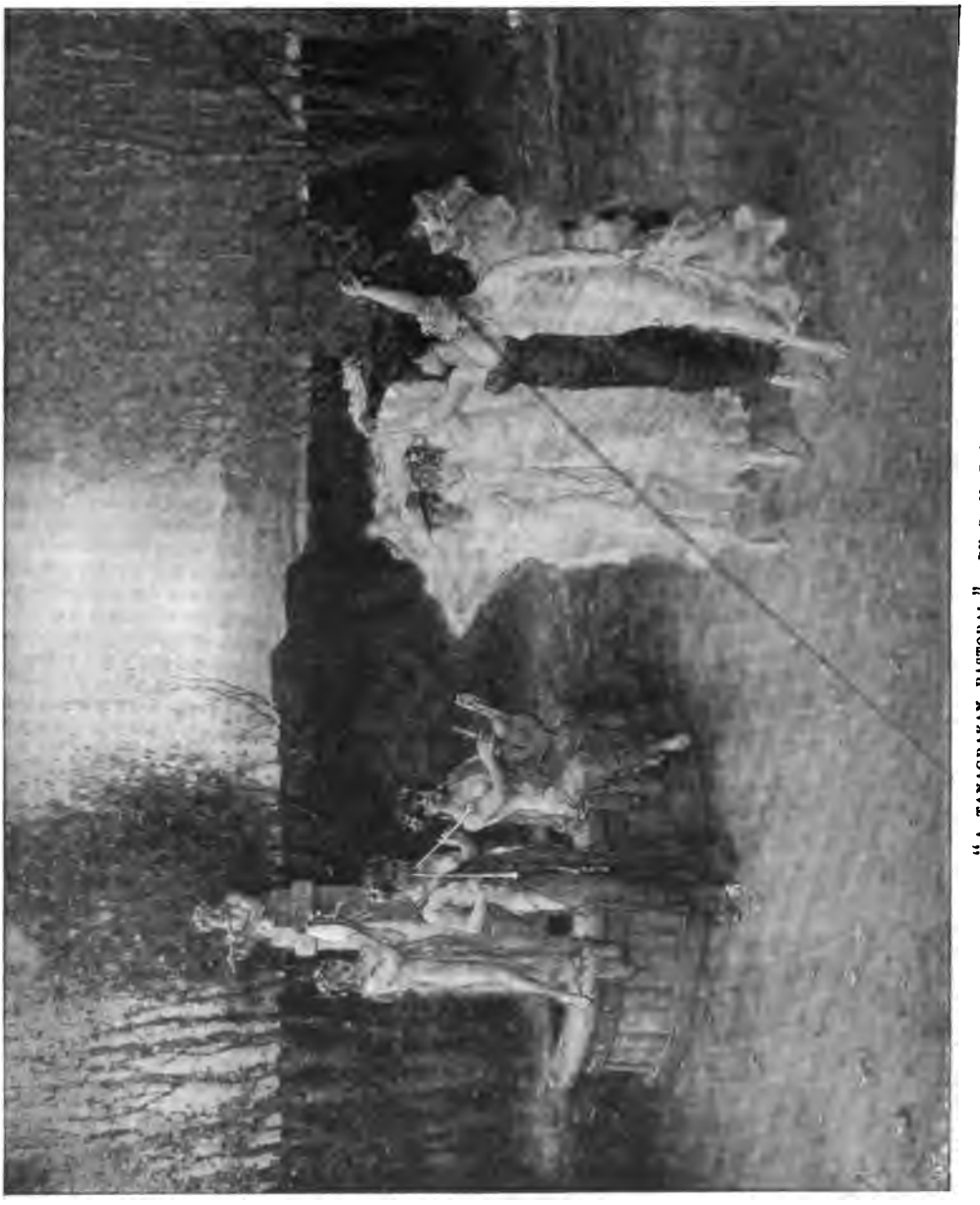
hurry past a house of fever at the door of which the condemned Hester, with her letter of shame fastened to her breast, stands knocking with the offer of service.

Milton, like a great modern poet, had three wives; but he had at least four love-stories, three concerning the ladies in question, and one concerning the lady with whom he threatened the wife who long absented herself at her father's house. In having one wife



"A TANAGRAKAN PASTORAL." BY G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A.

to whom he could refer as his "late espoused saint," "brought to me like Alcestis from the grave," he had, perhaps, such full measure of matrimonial happiness as is allowed to mortals. But neither the prose of common fact nor the memory that Milton was the advocate, and no disinterested one, for Divorce, must be recalled when we look at the scene of "First Love" depicted by Mr. Boughton, who shows us a beautiful, but

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"THE FIRST WINTER IN NEW ENGLAND: PILGRIMS WATCHING FOR THE RELIEF SHIPS."
BY G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A.

"AN EDICT OF WILLIAM THE TESTY." BY G. H. BOUGHTON, R.A.

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also a bookish, damsel, such as should fairly fall to Milton if poetical justice were done in the world.

Tennyson is taken very much at his word by Mr. Boughton when he peoples the "Road to Camelot." The poem *suggests* a silent and lonely country, but *describes* the groups, wayfarers, and stragglers who broke the silence and the solitude. The slight paradox is inevitable, for a few words express the long solitude, whereas many words describe the rare company. A like accident befalls a play of Ibsen's, in which the seclusion of a disappointed man in an upper chamber is described in some brief phrases of dialogue; but what the audience sees is an upper chamber populous with all kinds of visitors. The eremitic years gone by do not appear. Tennyson, being a much better artist than Ibsen, has kept the just proportion in his exquisite lines—some of the most purely poetic, after the Tennysonian magical manner of poetry, that he ever wrote. But an illustrator has only his moment to work with; and Mr. Boughton has made the most of his moment; his passers-by, watched by the enchanted lady in her mirror, make a veritable procession.

The studio of Mr. Boughton is first of all a work-place. There are moralists and censors who have accused dull women of seeking to redeem their dulness by the magnificence of their dress—a proceeding which, if true, is not incapable of plausible defence. Certain it is that studios seem to follow some law by which their own beauty, and the beauty of the work they turn out, is at an inverse ratio. The great painters have simpler accessories than the *petits maîtres*, the foppish amateurs of the easel. Nor has Mr. Boughton any studio mysteries, any secret methods. He disclaims any discoveries, any trickeries of *technique*. He saw his objects with a single eye, or felt them with a single heart; he made his record with an answering directness; and, both in his reticent handling and in the range of his palette, he may lay claim to a title that is to him among the most honourable of appellations—a Puritan of the paint-box.

MR. G. H. BOUGHTON'S STUDIO AT HIS HOUSE ON CAMPDEN HILL.

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A GAME OF DRAUGHTS.

By FRED M. WHITE.*

CLIFFORD STEELE quietly remarked that the game was over, which patent fact his opponent admitted cheerfully, with the rider that there was more in the game of draughts than people imagined. The two were playing comfortably between their cigarettes in the luxurious lounge of the Brema Castle Hotel. A band was playing somewhere in the distance, there was a *crescendo* of chattering voices, the soft swish of draperies. A tall girl, with a white, sad face, passed along as Steele was packing up the draughtsmen. She paused suddenly.

"Perhaps you would like to play, Miss Denbury?" Steele hazarded. His late antagonist had strolled away. "If so——"

"I loathe the game," Angela said almost passionately. "To my mind, there is something so horridly weird—— Mr. Steele, are you a good player?"

The girl paused, and her manner changed suddenly. The keen-eyed, shrewd young barrister was regarding her intently. Surely mere dislike for an innocent pastime could not have touched her passions so deeply. Angela Denbury was more beautiful than she had been when Steele first met her at Davos Platz some eighteen months before, but then the white sorrow of her face had been the glowing happiness of irresponsible youth. The passing months had made sad history for Angela Denbury lately. She sat down by Steele's side and commenced to fan herself gently.

"Mr. Steele," she said abruptly, "do you remember Raymond Hare?"

Steele nodded. He was beginning to understand. Raymond Hare had been at Davos Platz at that time . . . Certainly a handsome, healthy young fellow, with everything good on his side. There was a flush on Angela's face now.

"If I can help you," Steele suggested, "pray command me."

"Yes, yes. You are very good. When I met you in the corridor yesterday, it occurred to me that you might be disposed . . . Raymond liked you; indeed, you were very friendly at Davos. Do you know that Hare Park, Raymond's place, is not far from here?"

"Then I shall certainly ride over and call," said Steele. "I hope he's well. But that class of athlete is never sick or sorry."

"Indeed, you are quite wrong," Miss Denbury replied. "Raymond is dying. He is dying of a broken heart. And it will be merciful if he is taken away before he loses his mind altogether."

Steele was deeply shocked. Something told him that he was to hear more, but he had too much tact and delicacy to ask questions. With the dreamy murmur of the band and the smiling faces about him, it seemed hard all at once to grapple with the tragedy hanging over two lives.

"It seems almost farcical," Angela went on —"at least, in one way. You were surprised a minute or two ago at an outburst of mine over a simple question about a game of draughts. If that game had never been invented, I should be a happy girl to-day with—with——"

"Raymond Hare," Steele murmured. "Won't you take me into your confidence? Anything that lies in my power to do I will do gladly."

It was some moments before Angela replied. Her dark eyes were fixed upon space.

"Do you believe in warnings and banshees and occult things?" she asked suddenly.

"Not in the least," Steele replied. "I have found the air of the police-courts wonderfully efficacious in solving mysteries of that kind."

"Then you would look with suspicious eyes upon a game of draughts played by invisible hands in an old castle at midnight."

"I should indeed. That is all very well in the pages of Christmas fiction."

"Mr. Steele, I have seen it myself; I have felt the icy draught; I have heard the clash of steel; I have seen the red and white men

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moved. And when the game has been played for the fifty-second consecutive Saturday night, Raymond Hare will die—if he does not go out of his mind first."

The last few words were uttered with the deepest sadness. They were none the less sad because they sounded so strangely out of place there.

"The fulfilment of a legend," Steele murmured. "Please tell me the story. You have no idea how deeply I am interested. Those spectral antagonists are playing for the life of a living man. As a champion performer, I should very much like to be present at one of those contests. Does one invariably win?"

"Oh, no! Sometimes one player, and sometimes the other. If red is successful in the majority of cases, then Raymond's life is spared. Otherwise—oh, Mr. Steele! is it possible that such things can really be?"

The man of the world smiled sceptically. Those family legends were generally very interesting. He intimated that he would much like to hear this one.

"I can tell you in a few words," said Angela. "The Hares and the Monks have ever been bitter rivals; and when the War of the Roses broke out, the heads of the two houses took different sides. After the disaster of Bosworth Field, Alyward Monk fled home, and Amyas Hare betrayed him. The former surprised the latter at dead of night over a curious draughtsboard in the big hall. Then there was a scene. They were neither of them armed, but there were plenty of rapiers about. Monk swore that he or Hare should die. Then they played each for the life of the other across the draughtsboard, and Alyward Monk won. Amyas Hare handed a rapier to the victor, who stabbed him to the heart under the very eyes of the unhappy man's wife, who had come down to see why her husband had not gone to bed. And ever since then, for a year before the death of the head of the Hare family, that ghostly game is played every Saturday night. No doubt you have heard many similar legends, but I have seen the working of this one for myself. Sometimes the curse misses a generation, but it is working for Raymond Hare now as it worked for his father. The latter knew his end was coming, and it did. Within a week of the end of his year he broke his neck out hunting."

"It might have been a coincidence," Steele suggested.

"Oh, I grant you that!" Angela exclaimed. "More especially as ever since that dreadful discovery by the distracted wife, the Hares have been a highly strung, emotional, imaginative race. But the thing is going on now, and Raymond will never be able to stand the strain. If he is not driven to suicide, his mind must give way. And we were so happy together; we loved one another so dearly. And now, and now——"

The girl paused, with the tears brimming on her lashes like diamonds. The deep sadness of her face touched Steele to the heart.

"Let me ask you one practical question," he said. "In the event of Raymond Hare's death, who comes into the property?"

Angela Denbury did not quite know. There was an elderly second cousin, a very nice kind of man who lived with Hare, who she imagined was next-of-kin. George Minton had once been marked out as a great geologist, or something of that kind, before he gave up his career for the sake of Hare. Steele nodded carelessly, but he made a note of the same.

"Now tell me something about the phenomena," he asked. "When and under what circumstances did you see it for yourself?"

"Well, of course I have known all about it for years," Angela replied. "Raymond told me how the thing had acted in his father's case. But that was some five years ago, and, after all, it rested on the evidence of servants. Moreover, Raymond's father was a very hard-living man, and in any case could not have survived long. Raymond had never seen those metal draughtsmen move till shortly after we were engaged, and then there was a big house-party at Hare Park. I shall never forget his face the next morning. At my urgent request the secret was kept from everybody but Mr. Minton. At the same time I could not quite bring myself to believe in the phenomena. I decided to see for myself the following Saturday night after the house was quiet.

"A little after midnight I came down into the great flagged hall. It was a warm night and I felt no inconvenience. I reached the place where the queer metal draughtsboard stood with the metal men ranged upon it. I had a queer feeling that somebody was watching me. One or two electric lamps were always left burning in the hall, so that I took courage. Then, with a kind of feeling that it was all so much nonsense, I hid behind a curtain.

"At the end of ten minutes an icy draught

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"'I loathe the game,' Angela said almost passionately."

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swept along the hall. There were murmurs like the sound of strife, a little pause, then, to my horror, one of the draughtsmen moved! It was only by a great effort that I kept myself from yelling aloud. . . . Well, I watched that clever, weird game played till white won—white, the colour of the House of York, whose cause Alyward Monk had espoused. If the material fingers of two champions had been on the table, it had been no better played. I saw the taken pieces rise in the air and fall on the table with a dull clink, then I heard the thud of a body and the clatter of a rapier, as the victor carelessly tossed it on the floor. If you ask me what happened after that, I frankly say that I don't know. When I came to myself again, I was lying on my bedroom floor, and the stable clock was striking three."

The girl paused with a long-drawn sigh; her dark eyes were full of pain. She half glanced at her companion to see if he were smiling at her. But there was no smile on Steele's keen, clean-shaven face.

"Can you find it possible to believe my story?" Angela asked.

"Every word of it," Steele said promptly. "I feel sure that your eyes did not deceive you. Also I feel pretty sure that there is some explanation. And now I am going to help you if I possibly can. In the first place, you are not to let anybody know what you have told me—not even Raymond Hare. He must be led to understand that the family secret is intact. In the next place you must contrive for me to become a guest at Hare Park for a few days. Does Hare come here at all—to see you, I mean?"

"Two or three times a week; indeed, I am in this hotel so as to be near him. He has insisted upon our engagement being broken off; but so long as there is life, there is hope, and I shall never give Raymond up, never!"

"Indeed, I hope there will be no reason," Steele said warmly. "Write and ask Hare to come and see you to-morrow. Say I am leaving for Scotland in the morning, and my room is already engaged. Under pretence that I cannot stay here, I am going to ask Mr. Hare to put me up for a day or two."

"He will be delighted. The face of an old friend distracts him from——"

"Then that is settled," Steele said cheerfully. "I'm going to my own room now, where I can think the matter out over a quiet cigarette. Also I shall have to write one or two important letters. Good night."

He pressed the girl's hand warmly, leaving her with a glow and a feeling of happiness to which she had long been a stranger. He sat down beside his own window till the noise and clatter of the hotel had ceased; he looked out into the darkness with a cigarette glowing between his teeth. Gradually something like a theory began to shape itself in his mind. Then Steele switched on the light and wrote a couple of letters, which he decided to post personally. One was addressed to a well-known firm of private detectives. There was nothing in it besides a single person's name, written across the middle of the page, with a query after it. Steele smiled grimly as he fastened down the flap and sealed it; after which he dismissed the subject from his mind and went to bed.

II.

With a post-prandial cigarette well alight, Steele was thoughtfully regarding his host. There was another man present—a slight, tall man, with a pleasant face and open smile, who had been introduced to Steele as Minton. Raymond Hare himself was making pictures on the tablecloth with his breadcrumbs. He was deadly pale, fitfully silent, and feverishly gay. His dark eyes expanded strangely, the lids twitched in a quick, nervous way. Steele knew two men who had been all through the siege of Kimberley, and he recognised the same symptoms—nerves of the worst type.

"You ought to be a happy man here," he said. "I never saw a more perfect specimen of a Tudor house. A man who possesses seven Romneys could not possibly be miserable. What do you think, Mr. Minton?"

Minton smiled in his pleasant manner. Hare started. He seemed on the verge of an outburst, but checked himself.

"I am never quite happy on a Saturday night," he said, as if speaking more to himself than anything else. "What nonsense I am saying!"

Steele's air of polite bewilderment was perfect, Minton's expression was one of annoyance. On the far side of the electric flower-stand Steele could study the features of the other two. Electric lights in old copper fittings were everywhere. The night was a little chilly, so that an electric radiator gleamed in the deep, old-fashioned fireplace. Raymond Hare rose from his seat, muttering that he had forgotten something. His face was ghastly pale, and there were heavy drops on his forehead, though Steele affected to see nothing of this.

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"My nephew is not quite himself lately," Mr. Minton said.

"Not enough to do," Steele laughed. "It is a favourite axiom of mine that the man who has everything is never really happy. Now, the change from a hotel to a house like this is a great treat to me. How wonderfully well the electric lights blend with these old walls! Do you run your stoves on the same set of wires?"

Minton explained that there was practically a second set for the stoves. If the ordinary lights went wrong, then they had always the stoves to fall back upon. The scheme was his own, though he did not profess to know anything of the technical part of the business.

"You have not studied electricity, then?" Steele asked carelessly.

"I am ashamed to say that I know nothing whatever about it," Minton laughed. "Take a cigar, and come and play a game of billiards. I dare say Raymond will be down again presently."

On the whole, it was an exceedingly dull evening, and more than once Steele wished himself at the hotel again. Hare was distrait and uneasy, and Minton appeared to be keeping an anxious watch over him. Steele put up his cue after the third game and refused to play any more.

"I am afraid that we are neither of us up to championship form," he said. "As it is just eleven o'clock, I dare not play, lest the game should carry us into Sunday, which is one of the drawbacks of Saturday night."

"To-night is Saturday," Hare said suddenly. "Ugh! somebody is walking over my grave. I hope I shall be better to-morrow."

Steele murmured something appropriate. Personally he would have liked to have suggested sending for the doctor, and the advisability of having somebody to look after his host, but that was out of the question. Outside the walls of an asylum, he had never seen anything like the face his friend turned to him just for the moment. No mind could stand a strain like that for long.

The house grew quiet presently; there was a faint light or two in the hall and corridors. For the best part of an hour Steele sat in his room smoking. A few minutes before midnight he put down his cigarette and crept out into the corridor. It looked very dim and lonely, despite the specks of light here and there. The black walls, with their strong portraits, the ghostly figures in armour, all appealed to a strong imagination. Well in hand, as he usually held himself, Steele was conscious of an extra heartbeat or so as he crept downstairs. He stood presently on the polished oak floor close by where stood the fatal draughtsboard, with the men neatly arranged thereon.

Steele proceeded to examine the curiosity carefully. The board stood on a slim iron leg fantastically decorated with beaten copper. The foot was ornate with the same rich scroll-work; the top was a perfect specimen of the ironworker's art. The foot was bolted into the floor, as it was liable to topple over. The twenty-four draughtsmen were made of some kind of metal; the tops were enamelled in red and white. Altogether it was the kind of graceful work of art that one might see at Christie's, and which might fetch anything up to a thousand pounds. As Steele stood there, the clock struck midnight.

Almost instantly the corridor was filled with an icy current of air. Steele looked round, expecting to find an open window somewhere; but there was no sign of that, and the cold air continued. There was a faint moaning sound that came from somewhere overhead, a weird sound calculated to fray a set of nerves not too highly tempered. Steele was feeling the influence of it.

He stepped back for a moment, and as he did so, one of the red draughtsmen moved a square. Steele could distinctly hear the slide of metal on metal. A curious sensation shot up his spine, there was a queer tingling at the roots of his hair. Just for a moment he had a wild impulse to rush back to his room and lock himself in there.

"I'm not surprised at Hare," he muttered. "Seen unexpectedly, it would try the nerves of the strongest man."

The phantom game continued. Steele crushed down the fear that held him. He was watching with a vivid curiosity that almost amounted to pain. Not only was a ghostly contest in progress, but it was a masterly one. A man would be pushed forward and taken, it would rise with a little quick motion in the air, and fall with a dull click on the side of the table. Steele watched the whole thing with eyes that fairly started from his head. He saw the skill of attack and parry, and saw that gradually the unseen white foeman was getting the best of the contest. At the end of a quarter of an hour the game was won. White had two men left. It was a strange feature of the game that neither antagonist ever made the smallest effort to get a king. The contest

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was a cutting down one from start to finish. Perhaps the king at draughts was an innovation since the early Tudor days. The game was over. Almost immediately upon its termination came a dull sound like the falling of a body, then the rattle of steel, as if somebody had carelessly tossed a rapier on the oak floor.

The sound brought Steele out of his waking dream. He felt that he had had quite enough of it for one night. There was bound to be some explanation for this uncanny performance; but all the same, Steele felt that he could work it out better in the light of his bedroom. As he turned, he ran into something soft and yielding. It was Raymond Hare, standing petrified and absolutely unconscious of the fact that he was not alone.

"White won!" he whispered hoarsely. "White again! That is three Saturdays in succession—nearly two to one against me. God be good to me!"

He was swaying from head to foot in terror. As he suddenly realised Steele's presence, he opened his lips for a cry of despair. Steele's hand was over his mouth instantly.

"Not a sound," he commanded sternly. "Come up to my room with me, and I'll give you some brandy from my flask."

The strong mind bore down the weaker one. With a shaking hand, Hare began to place the draughtsmen in order again. He whispered something about the servants, and that they must have no opportunity to gossip. Perhaps he was not so far gone, after all, Steele thought. He was bound to admit to himself that he should not have cared for the task.

With a feeling of pleased satisfaction he found himself in his room again. A spoonful of brandy brought a little colour into Hare's cheeks.

"How long has this been going on?" Steele asked.

"Getting on for a year," Hare replied. "I suppose you found out. Well, I am not sorry, Steele; if I don't tell somebody, I shall go mad. Sometimes white wins and sometimes red wins, but always the balance against me. And when this year is up, I shall die, as my father did before me."

"I hope not, old fellow. Was your father's case authenticated?"

"I suppose so," Hare said hopelessly. "Not long before he died, an old servant said she came down one morning and found the draughtsmen lying on the side of the table, as if somebody had been playing a game."

"That's a coincidence, of course. At the same time, a careless servant may have swept them off by accident in passing. Personally, I refuse to believe that there is anything occult about this business at all. Let's talk about something else. I was saying to your uncle how well those electric fittings go with the old house. Have you had them for very long?"

"The light was first used on December 19 of last year," said Hare.

"Well, there's nothing the matter with your memory, anyway," Steele smiled—"if a man can recollect things like that."

"But, my dear fellow, I have the best possible reasons for remembering," Hare broke in. "It was on the third day after that that the ghosts came back again to play their hideous game for my life."

"In that case you would recollect," Steele said thoughtfully. "Did you see the game for yourself, or did one of the servants?"

"The servants know nothing of the present trouble. My uncle saw it first. He was so fearfully upset and agitated that I guessed what had happened, and taxed him with it. As a man of honour he was bound to tell the truth. And for many a weary Saturday since then have I watched the game. God only knows why I am sane to tell the story now."

There was a deep pity in Steele's heart, a pity steeped in a more violent emotion. He was beginning to see his way. Meanwhile he wanted to be alone to think. Most part of the next day he wrote letters. Two long telegrams he despatched, and waited for the reply personally. Later on in the evening he called at the post-office for letters, receiving one small parcel that looked like a bottle of some kind. It was a tiny phial of white liquid that he slipped into the pocket of his dress waistcoat as he sat down to dinner. If there were anything in his theory, Steele was determined to put it to the test before long; and if he were right, he promised himself a pretty piece of comedy before the week had elapsed.

It was a quiet evening and a quiet dinner, like the others. Steele, pleading that he had letters to write, retired early, as did the others. But the letter-writer must have been quick over his work, for a little later, in his shirt-sleeves, he marched boldly out into the corridor and thence into the hall. In his hand he carried a hammer, a pair of pliers, and a screwdriver. He let the hammer fall with

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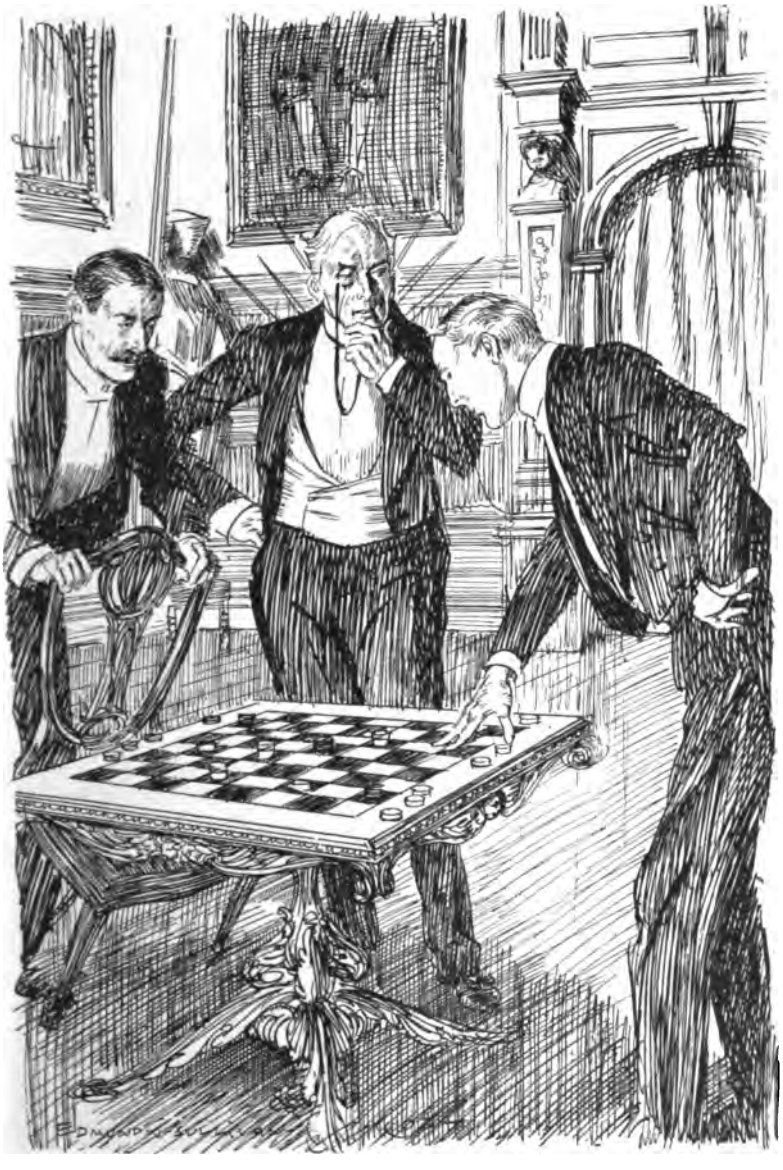
a loud clang in the corridor. Not a sound followed. Then he made his way down into the hall and proceeded to turn on an extra light or two.

One o'clock was striking as Steele returned to his room again. There was a smile in his eyes, but his lips were grimly set. On the whole, he had the air of a man who is satisfied with himself.

"If I were a novelist," he said, "I would make a rattling good thing out of this."



"Once more he placed the men, and once more they started of their own volition."

III.

THE great clock over the stables boomed the midnight hour. Before the second stroke had sounded, Steele was out of the room and into the corridor. There was no disguise about his movements now. He reached the door leading to Mr. Minton's room and rapped sharply. He waited for no reply, but entered without ceremony.

The lights were up, and as yet Minton was fully dressed. There was just the shade of annoyance on the elder man's face. He was coldly demanding to know the meaning of Steele's intrusion when the latter cut him short.

"It is a very pressing matter," he said. "I want you to be good enough to come with me without delay. I have made a discovery."

"Ah! so you have found out the secret of the house! Did you ever hear of anything so distressing, so—so—you know what I mean?"

"I know what you mean perfectly well," said Steele drily. "And I can quite understand why this thing is never mentioned to a stranger. Meanwhile, it seems to me I have found a way to save your unhappy nephew. Will you come this way?"

Minton nodded. He seemed to be swallowing something hard. Steele's request sounded more like a command. Down below in the

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hall, Raymond Hare was standing watching that infernal game of draughts in dazed, sick fascination. No murderer waiting for the verdict could have had a more agonised look in his eyes. He was absolutely unconscious of the other two, he had no gaze for anything but the ghastly shifting pieces. The game went on; red made his last fatal move; it was obvious to the meanest understanding that the contest was finished, though a piece or two stood on the table. Then came the sound of the falling body, the clash of steel on wood.

Steele touched Raymond Hare on the shoulder. He looked up with a start. Minton would have hurried him away, but Steele interfered.

"I am not quite satisfied," he said quietly. "Personally, I have yet to be convinced that there is no material reason in this thing. I am going to put the men on the board again, and when I have done so——"

"For Heaven's sake," Minton said hoarsely, "be careful! This is no time——"

"I know it; but I am not in the least afraid. I set the men out so; I am going to challenge the spirit of the House of York to a little game. Now, sir, if you are quite ready."

Steele bowed mockingly. He just reached forward and touched the board, and a white piece moved of its own volition. Immediately a red man jumped from one square to another. Steele turned with a smile to his deeply interested audience. A queer, shaky cry came from Hare's lips.

"It is a new game," he said—"the moves are different. Heaven knows I should be able to tell, seeing that they are burnt into the very matter of my brain!" He was trembling from head to foot with a sudden, sickening hopefulness. The moves of the new game were terribly one-sided. Almost before it had commenced, white's men were slaughtered right and left, and the conflict over.

"We have brought the science up to date," Steele said flippantly. "The shade of your departed ancestor has evidently been attending a tournament or two. A *coup* or two like that will always give him the best of his old antagonist. Really, my dear Hare, you need have no further anxiety in future. Stay quietly tucked up in your bed Saturday nights, and at the end of the year white will find himself in a hopeless minority as regards wins. Again!"

Once more he placed the men, and once more they started of their own volition. This time the moves were slightly different from the last, but after half-a-dozen squares were covered white was once more in difficulties. The weird element seemed to have dropped out of the situation almost. The white, drawn agony had left Hare's face; he was looking on with the air of a man who sees something new and strange in the way of machinery for the first time.

"Come away," Minton said hoarsely. "There is something almost blasphemous in this. And in any case, this flippancy——"

He moved over towards the wall, and immediately the place was in darkness. The electric lights had suddenly failed. Hare cried in affright, his nerves all frayed out at once, and fearful of some ghostly visitation. But Steele took one step near to the draughts-board and waited. Presently he felt a hand just creeping past his own fingers. He fastened on it at once. He uttered no sound, he only held on with a vicelike grip. It was useless for his unseen antagonist to struggle.

"Switch on the stove in the fireplace," he said. "I'm told that's on a separate current, and it will give us plenty of light. Aha! I thought so."

A dull red glow from the big radiator filled the hall and disclosed the figure of Minton on the other side of the board. His wrist was firmly grasped by Steele, his pleasant face was pallid, dark, and scowling.

"He's pulled away the 'cut out' fuse," said Steele coolly. "Mr. Minton, kindly give me a fragment of copper wire, so that I can restore the circuit again. I know you usually carry some in your pocket. Your uncle is a clever man, Hare; he is quite a specialist in electrical matters."

Minton muttered something. All the same, he produced what Steele required. It was only a moment's work to restore the circuit again, almost as easy as a child knots two pieces of string. Hare looked from one face opposite to the other. A light was dawning upon him.

"I have been fooled," he said. "Some infernal jugglery——"

"To the top of your bent," Steele replied. "So far as Mr. Minton is concerned, the thing is finished. So much for a family carefully nurtured on old superstitions. Your ancestors before you have told that story till they came to believe it. Your father's death looked like a case in point. And that gave the wicked uncle yonder his cue. I did not really suspect him till he assured me he knew nothing whatever about electrical matters. When I ascertained that it had been a study with him, I began to put two and two together. See here."

Steele took a strong screwdriver from his

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pocket and proceeded to release the quaint old draughtsboard from its fastenings. Under the floor there were a score or more of fine electric wires running up the hollow stem of the table.

"The top of the table is hollow," Steele explained. "Hence the little arrangement was rendered all the easier. If you will examine the top of that board with a strong glass, you will find a tiny copper disc has been let into each of them. This once being done, the rest is easy. You only wanted a certain combination of moves to be arranged, and the electric agency does the rest. There is a little time-clock attached, so that the apparatus could be made to work at a given hour, and there you are. Night after night you have stood watching the thing with fascinated horror, whilst all the time it has been merely mechanical. And yet I was quite able to understand your feelings."

"What were your own the first time you saw it?" Hare asked hoarsely.

Steele freely admitted that the thing had touched his nerves.

"The icy draught was easy," he continued. "It was easy to open a skylight window in which was placed an electric fan. One of those things will soak that air all through the house in less than thirty seconds. As to the clash of steel, a flat piece of metal under the floor attached to one of these wires would do that. The whole thing has been most ingeniously arranged and carried out. You had an utterly unscrupulous rascal to deal with, and everything fitted most beautifully into his hands. If I were in your place, I should not prosecute; I should merely kick him out of the house in the morning. And if ever a scoundrel deserved to be hanged——"

Hare turned round passionately. But already Minton had discreetly disappeared. The sullen bang of his door could be heard, and the quick, grinding rasp of the key in the lock.

"Exit Minton," said Steele grimly. "If you are not too tired——"

"Tired!" Hare cried. "Tired! I feel as if I should never want to sleep again. If you could but faintly imagine what a load has been removed from my heart, if you could only understand the rush and joy of life, and know that the curse——"

"The curse never existed at all," said Steele. "But come to my room, and over a cigarette I'll tell you everything, from the moment that Miss Denbury confided in me and I promised my assistance."

Hare followed eagerly enough. He lay back, puffing his cigarette with exquisite enjoyment. Already there was a healthier tinge on his sallow cheek.

"First of all, I had to suspect somebody," said Steele. "I gave your uncle first choice; as a matter of fact, there was nobody else. I took the trouble to inquire into his antecedents. They were very bad; he was deeply in debt, and trading upon what might happen if you died. If you died, he came into everything. If you lost your reason, he would only be a little worse off than a wholesale inheritance. Then I found that your relative was an electrical expert. Also I found that the vision of the draughts-players had never been actually seen till the introduction of the electric light into the house.

"After this my case was pretty clear. I read up the subject, I drugged your dear uncle's whisky-and-soda one night, and then set to work. I took that said draughtsboard to pieces, and before daylight had not only mastered all its secrets, but reset the mechanical part to a problem of my own. I was going to have a certain amount of fun at your uncle's expense, but he got frightened, and so I had to act on the spur of the moment. Did you see his face when he saw the new combination move under a touch of my hand? No? I dare say you had no room for any thought but your own."

"He wanted to drive me mad!" Hare whispered.

"I fancy he wanted to drive you to suicide," Steele replied. "And when I saw you the first time I came here, he was not far off the accomplishment of his design."

A bright wave of colour came into Hare's cheeks. He seemed to have some little difficulty in getting out his words.

"Very nearly," he said in a low voice. "But for the fact that there is a girl who loves me and who would have so keenly felt the disgrace and sorrow of it, more than once I was on the verge—but why speak of that now? Steele, how can I possibly thank you? How can I——?"

He broke down utterly; then presently his eyes grew bright and sunny as they had been in the old days at Davos. He rose and came across to Steele with outstretched hands.

"Let this be a secret between us for all time," he said.

"Granted, on one condition," Steele laughed. "It is for me to make conditions."

"Of course; but I fancy I can guess what it is. You want to be——"

"Your best man," Steele said quietly. "It is my right, I fancy."

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AN AMERICAN IMPRESARIO.

By IAN MACLAREN.*

HEN I landed from the *Germanic* on the White Star Quay at New York, in the autumn of 1896, I saw Major Pond for the first time, and was instantly impressed by his largeness; and now, looking back over all my intercourse with him, and all I have ever heard of him, my impression is deeper than ever that the Major was a large man. He stood considerably over six feet in height, and his breadth was corresponding. He filled the doorway of a car, he required at least a seat and a half, his arms overflowed into neighbouring divisions, he filled the eye upon the street, and a room with his voice, and I fancy there were few beds that could hold him. But that was only the shell and appearance of the man; he was as big within as he was without, with a heart in keeping with his body. He was indifferent to money, although he liked the success of happy strokes and the pleasure of securing it for his friends. If he sometimes earned money quickly, he spent it lavishly, and would lend it to any who asked, sometimes to those who did not deserve his help and never repaid it; while he talked about money in a way that startled fastidious people, he was more lifted above the power of money than many who would never have mentioned "dollars." In spite of his enterprise and his push, in spite of his calculation in dollars and his frank celebration of any great coup, the Major was an unworldly man, and I should be surprised if, after all his large business, he has left much behind him. He could get, and beat any other man in getting, money in the way of his own profession, but he could not keep. Beecher taught him many things, but he couldn't teach the Major how to hoard. They say that Beecher himself failed in the worldly qualities of calculation and prudence. A small man has an advantage at this point, and whatever the Major was, he was not small.

Little schemes had no attraction for the Major, and it was whispered that he did not care for the ordinary routine of a literary agency; but give him a lecture tour which was to compass the United States and fill the Press, then the Major was in his glory. His genius was on the large scale, and it *was* genius. As soon as he heard of any man who had caught the popular ear and was likely to interest the vast American public, he did his best to place that man on the platform. My own belief is that he tried to secure every man of any fame in his day, from Mr. Spurgeon to Mr. Gladstone. I dare to think, though I do not know, that he must have sounded Lord Kitchener, and it was currently said that he had attempted the Pope. If he did not, it was not for want of courage. As soon as he had secured his man for an American tour, he set himself by every means within his knowledge (and what he did not know in this matter was not knowledge) to make that tour a huge success. For months before he was preparing and creating an atmosphere, taking public halls, arranging with local agents, sending articles to newspapers, and generally producing such an impression on the public mind that when the Major with his "star," as he loved to call him, arrived in any town, its citizens were convinced that if it was to be well with them both in this world and the next, they had better secure tickets for that lecture. As a rule, they did, and the Major was rarely disappointed. Even if his lecturer could not be heard a few seats from the platform, still he was a famous man, and the American public had seen him, and that the Major considered was a valuable privilege he had conferred. His belief was—but in that, of course, he may have been an optimist, and the rule certainly had exceptions—that he had never put a commonplace nonentity before the American public, and that the public therefore trusted him. When he was in the mood, he would speak of his work with the enthusiasm of a missionary, and it is a fact that he did care more about the pleasure he gave to his clients than about the money he could make. His management of Sir Henry Stanley's tour was a masterpiece, and proved the Major to be a Napoleon in his

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profession; and the contempt with which he would speak of any *impresario* who had got hold of a celebrity and didn't know how to use him was something worth hearing. "Land of liberty!" he would say, "he might have been a five-cent reciter for all they have done"; and then the Major would fall into a thoughtful silence, and one knew that he was imagining how he would have worked that tour. As a rule, he secured the "stars," and if, in the case of one whose terms were exorbitant, another *impresario* was allowed to engage him, the Major prophesied that the eminent person would have to come to him in the end; and as a matter of fact, the Major had to gather up the fragments of that man's tour. He was alone and unapproachable, and it strikes me his mantle is too big for any successor; it will be apt to smother him.

MAJOR POND.

His belief in the calling of a lecturer and the glory of the lecture-platform was absolutely sincere and knew no limits. The idea that a man who could obtain a large audience in one American city after another should shut himself up in a single church and preach to a few hundred people moved the Major almost to tears. It seemed so futile a choice, so wanton a waste. To face a well-packed house, either theatre or concert-hall, and have something to say to them, to read to them, or to show them something, was to his mind the highest point of attainment and usefulness. "Three thousand people gone home happy, my gracious! Isn't that enough to satisfy a man?" If the Major expected them to pay a dollar—and he did not believe in cheap seats—he was equally determined they should be made better in return for their dollar. Anything low or degrading the Major would not have tolerated, not although he were to make a fortune by it; he had seen more of life than most men, and some of it had been particularly rough life, but he was a clean-minded and high-spirited man who combined with all his shrewdness the simplicity of a child, and never forgot his mother's teaching or his mother's prayers. It amused him when some contented Englishman came over and talked down to his audience. Before the tour was over, the Major had persuaded his "star" that he must give something, or else he had no right to be on the platform, and the Major declared that the experience was an education. Indeed, according to him, there was nothing which lecturing could not accomplish for the lecturer; it taught him to deal with men, to open his chest, to speak out; it gave him an appetite, it saved him from weariness, it put on flesh. And he was accustomed to boast that not one of his "stars" had ever broken down, but that every one had gone home not only a richer, but also a stronger man.

If a "star" did break down, it certainly would not have been the Major's fault, for no one could have been more careful of his men. From the hour you started from New

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York under the Major's charge, to the hour you returned to the same city, he watched over you by night and day. His idea was that you should place yourself absolutely in his hands, and see no person and go nowhere without his consent. If you were driven to the railway, carefully guided there in your appointed seat, or secluded in the drawing-room of the car, driven from the station to your hotel, and again guarded from callers and vagrants and everybody else except carefully selected reporters, driven to the lecture-hall and placed on the platform, where, of course, you must do your own work, and then received by him behind the curtain, wrapped up, and driven home, and then, after milk and crackers, put to bed at an early hour; if you paid no private visits, went to no clubs, accepted no dinner invitations, wasted no time in vain conversations—then the Major guaranteed that you might lecture twice a day every day of the week except Sundays, and return home like a giant refreshed, or at least like a man after an agreeable holiday. When a foolish "star" went to reside in hospitable homes, spent hours talking to all kinds of people, sat up late at night, then the Major was in despair and would accept no responsibility. Upon such terms, no man could pursue his course and give forth a steady light. For his "star's" comfort the Major fought like a tiger, securing for him the best of rooms, the most desirable of tables, the most comfortable of berths, providing that he had his meat in due season, and was sheltered from the cold after speaking, and also had fresh air during the day, and saw anything there was to see in the city, but always under supervision. Still do I hear his voice explaining to certain visitors who wished to interview the lecturer of the evening.

"You are, gentlemen, I know, three of the highest-toned citizens of this great community, and Mr. Maclaren would love to meet you, but he is at present resting in the arms of Morpheus and must not be disturbed. You can't have everything in this poor, sinful world," concluded the Major with much solemnity, "and if you want to have the greatest time you ever had in your life this evening, you must just allow him to sleep this afternoon."

So they left, escorted to the door of the hotel by the Major, and loaded with complimentary remarks, while I finished the reading of the *Times*.

No man might trifle with the Major if the physical welfare of a "star" were involved. He descended upon one over-zealous sub-agent of his who had come into the sitting-room during resting time, and swept him out with contumely, and along the passage we could hear his voice booming.

"Six years working for me, and don't know my rule? No man interrupts the 'star' between his meal and his lecture. You ain't got sense enough to come out of the rain. Wanted to know something, did you? Ask me!" Yes, that was true enough; the Major was all-comprehensive and all-sufficing. He did everything and arranged everything except the actual lecture, and on that he could give hints. There were times when some plan went wrong, and the Major might let himself go if the circumstances were favourable. When he had, as he believed, secured the drawing-room in the sleeping-car, and somehow it had gone to another person than his "star," he interviewed the conductor and another official, and, not knowing that I was near, said what was in his mind, in the words gathered during his early days on the Mississippi and on the Frontier, and I learned for the first time the resources of indignant speech. When he had finished and had gone along to the head office to get his rights (which he secured), the conductor, who had long been silenced in the unequal contest, followed his retreating figure with unconcealed admiration.

"Ain't he a sporting duck?" said the conductor to his subordinate.

"You bet," was the reply. "There ain't no flies on the Major."

And yet I travelled many thousand miles with the Major, and never in all my conversation with him heard an unseemly or unkindly word. His ways were his own, and he was a Western in his habits and speech, and now that he is gone I wish to say the Major was a gentleman.

For one thing, and that means a great deal when one talks about a gentleman, the Major was absolutely straight in money affairs. He made his terms, and they were perfectly clear. It did not matter whether they were written or not, to them the Major adhered through adversity or through prosperity. It was said that some of his lecturers had tried to get behind the terms and had condescended to tricks, but no one would believe for a moment, even if any person said it, that the Major ever tried to break a bargain. He spent the long railway journeys very largely in doing his accounts, and every Saturday night he squared them with his partner to the last cent. He could hold his

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own with clerks in booking-offices when he suspected they were not playing fair, or with local agents who tried to get behind him, or with officials of institutions who wished to get lectures cheap, and, so far as I observed, the Major came out always on top. Nothing

HENRY WARD BEECHER.
Major Pond's favourite "star."

disgusted him—and he was quite right—so much as a lecturer who tried to better his bargain; and while it was his rule to speak generously of all his "stars," there were one or two whom he frankly despised, simply and solely because they had not been honourable. You might lose your temper with the Major because he was putting too much work upon you, for he always wanted to do the most for the "star" and for himself; you might say things to the Major when you were angry which afterwards you regretted; you might disobey and rebel against the Major; you might tease and laugh at him; but that made no difference to him if he liked you; the only thing that sickened the Major was meanness.

"Good-bye," said one Englishman to him in parting. "I shake the dust of this country off my feet." He had done very well, and the Major had stretched points in his favour; but there were no bounds to that eminent person's greed, and it was right that something should be said.

"Not the gold dust," replied the Major; "you have taken the last grain of it."

And the Major always entertained his own opinion of that eminent person.

Then he was a sportsman, out and out, in the sense that he could play either a winning or a losing game; and if he were losing, would never whine, and always despised men who did. He used to explain, with much emphasis and considerable detail, that if he, so to say, sublet the lecture to any local agent, he preferred that it should be to a theatrical *impresario* rather than to some philanthropic institution; because if the lecture were a great success and the philanthropists had made a haul, they would still try to knock off a dollar here and there, and if the lecture had barely paid, they would at once begin to plead for a reduction in charge, while the theatrical people, the Major declared, were accurate with their accounts to a cent, and even if they lost, never dreamt of complaining. "Win or lose, they knew it was in the game, and they took the situation like men. They've got their faults," the Major used to add, "those theatrical managers, but they ain't babies."

"You won't be discouraged by the house," the Major would sometimes say in the retiring-room. "The people have gathered pretty close to the front," and then one came to know that the house would be packed to the ceiling. But if there were a thin house, the Major would fall back on how his hero Beecher met that emergency.

"Not many present?" Beecher used to say. "Well, then, Major, they must just have the better lecture, a quarter of an hour longer, and the finest I have." And the Major would add: "The greatest man I ever knew. Never was afraid and never complained." Beecher had taught his friend to be great in the same way, for I can bear witness, and still more the greater "stars"—for though we were all, according to the Major, "stars," one "star" differed from another "star" in glory—that the Major never complained. If the audience were thin, or the night were bad, or the lecturer were not well heard, or the profits were small, or the Press unfavourable, never would the Major round on his "star." He always made the best of things, and had a cheery word, like the brave old fighter that he was. His pluck was unvarying and indomitable. You never knew when he was beaten, and in my experience he never was beaten.

Upon the long railway journeys he was the best of companions, for he had an in-

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exhaustible store of reminiscences, stories of the old Frontier days when he was an Indian fighter, pointing out from the car as we crossed the prairie the river bank on which they had been nearly ambushed by the Indians; describing how he got Brigham Young's wife out of Salt Lake City and brought her to Washington, in the days when to leave the Mormon capital without a pass was almost a sentence to death; going over the famous singers and literary men he had conducted, with many a racy anecdote; or recalling the guerilla warfare, when, with a major's command of cavalry, he was fighting the Southern Irregulars, and when no quarter was given. But sooner or later he fell back on the great reserve of his conversation, which was Henry Ward Beecher. How that man could sway congregations of people from the pulpit or from the lecture-platform as the corn waves before the wind; how patiently and bravely he endured shameful slander and confusion; how pure and big was his heart; how many and kind were his actions. Such themes the Major would speak on by the hour, till at last he could not contain himself longer, and would leave abruptly for the smoking-car to do his accounts, with a last word: "When the Almighty made that man, He broke the mould." It was a strong testimony, for there was no person the Major did not know, from the President of the United States in the White House, and the Governor of each State in his house, to the manager of the smallest theatre and the negro porters on the sleeping-cars, who used to brighten up visibly when the Major appeared, and all of whom he called "George" without any distinction. It was his pleasant fiction to describe George as the owner of landed property, and far lifted above the indignity of a tip, yet it was not for philanthropy that each George served the Major so cheerfully. George will miss the Major's gigantic figure, with a "star" concealed behind, entering the cars of a San Francisco express, and hotel clerks will long remember the arrival of the Major, demanding to know whether "this is still conducted as a high-class hotel," and whether "sleeping accommodation can be secured for" (here fill in the "star's" name); and as rooms had been long ago bespoke, this was merely a symbolical way of intimating that the Major had arrived. By an accident which the Major was never able to explain, the reporters from the leading papers arrived about the same time, and although he guarded his "star" so jealously from stray visitors, he was always anxious to introduce him to the gentlemen of the Press, and the Major then presided with much skill and tact over the interview. When it had finished, he used to congratulate the "star," and assure him that the reporters had gone away happy men, and that henceforward life for them would be nobler and more beautiful.

Whether Englishmen will cross to the States and lecture now that the Major is gone, I do not know, but I doubt very much. Certainly they will never have again so able or so kindly a manager, nor can they have one more upright and honourable. And I am certain that there was not one of the Major's "stars" who received the unexpected intelligence of his death without feeling that he was poorer through the loss of a most faithful and affectionate friend, who was also a man of the finest honour and a master in his profession.

THE OLD YEAR.

WHAT is the old year? 'Tis a book
On which we backward sadly look,
Not willing quite to see it close,
For leaves of violet and rose
Within its heart are thickly strewn,
Marking Love's dawn and golden noon;
And turn-down pages, noting days
Dimly recalled through Memory's haze;
And tear-stained pages, too, that tell
Of starless nights and mournful knell
Of bells that tolled through trouble's air
The *De Profundis* of despair—
The laugh, the tear, the shine, the shade,
All 'twixt the covers gently laid;
No uncut leaves, no page unscanned:
Close it and lay it in God's hand.

CLARENCE URMY.

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THE GARDEN OF LIES.

By JUSTUS MILES FORMAN,*

Author of "Journeys End," "Cupid's House Party," etc.

TO maintain that a man's character is determined for good or ill by the circumstances Chance throws in his way, by the gay or sorry tricks Fate plays him, has ever seemed to me a folly. Yet so Von Altdorf maintained most strenuously as we sat, last evening and late into the night, on the terrasse of one of those thronged and gaily lighted cafés along the old Boulevard St. Michel—"La Source" it was—and talked of the great game that we had tried to play, long since, and of how the game was taken out of our hands by greater hands and played to so strange an end.

"Else why," demanded Von Altdorf, pursuing his argument, "why did Denis Mallory happen into the Café d'Alençon on that particular evening of all evenings? Why did he not pass by and—end his days in the grave of a drunkard and blackguard? How else did he grow into a nobility and greatness that shamed us all, but by force of the circumstances into which he fell in those following weeks? Answer me that."

"He was led," said I firmly, "into the café, that night, by something greater than chance, my friend, something beyond our philosophy. And he was given us to do our work by no mere happening. Moreover, if circumstances make a man, why, then, didn't Denis Mallory prove, later on, a greater blackguard than one likes to think—later, when circumstances made it possible for him, and chance made it easy? Answer me that."

But Von Altdorf shook his grey head and frowned out into the bustle and hurry of the boulevard, where the fiacres dashed up and down, loaded with students and cocottes, and a steam tram panted noisily up the hill.

It was the first time we had met since those days two years ago—two years, did I say? By my faith! it seems but two weeks. I can see their faces, hear their voices, those players of a great game—Mr. Mallory's and Sir Gavin's and Von Altdorf's and the Prince's, and perhaps more vividly, more intimately than all, the face and voice of the unhappy lady whose fate had seemed to lie in our hands.

It was our first meeting, and we had much to say to each other. Von Altdorf had come on to Paris from Vienna on a private mission of the Emperor whom he now serves, and I had run across from London to meet him.

It pleased our whim, once dinner was over, to cross the river to the old quarter again, to revisit the gay boulevard, with its trees, and its cafés, and its throngs of grotesquely garbed students. It changes little as time goes.

It was good to see him, to clasp his hand once more, to talk long and fully of those matters that neither of us may ever forget, but I am not altogether sure that I am glad we met. There was a difference, a certain something of restraint, a failure to see things quite from the same view-point. Von Altdorf's mind was full of his present business, of the secrets and policies of the Court of Vienna. The present and the future pressed insistently upon him, and he turned with a certain effort, a stiffness, to look backward.

As for me, why, I suppose I was most keenly occupied with my own little affairs and my own future. The two years had carried us apart, filmed the windows of memory, deadened ever so slightly the keenness of those passions that once were all our life.

And so it has occurred to me since I bade farewell to Von Altdorf and saw him off again to his work in the East, to set down as faithfully as I may, while yet my memory is fresh and strong, the story of the man who won our love and admiration against such

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odds, and beside whom all other men seem to me dwarfed and petty.

There can be no harm in writing of these matters now. Denis Mallory is very far away beyond the stir and murmur of this western world of ours, and She is far away too. MacKenzie is back in London. He has an office in Harley Street, where you may consult him at certain hours—for a certain number of guineas. I see him now and then, but we never talk of Paris. Von Altdorf is, as I have said, busied in Vienna, and the Prince is with his fathers—God rest his soul!

To no one beyond these few could the telling of my tale be of consequence. The things that stirred us all so deeply never reached the great public, though Heaven knows they came near enough to reaching it. The very realm over which we plotted and schemed and fought has been quietly erased from the map of Europe by that swift and noiseless hand outstretched from the white throne in the North, which will some day as quietly erase the names of all the remaining little States that we call the Balkans, and of whose inner history we know so little.

But let me come to my tale without further parley, save in the matter of this. In what I shall tell, there must be, perforce, much which I did not personally see or hear. Such things I have gained in part from those others who knew directly of them, partly from my knowledge of what such a one would do or say when so placed. I must put myself in the position of the writer of fanciful tales, who pretends to see what is in the minds and hearts of the puppets his hand dangles. All this for a greater smoothness in the telling and a wider scope of view to him who reads.

* * * * *

I mind that I had been dining that spring evening over the proper side of the river in the Avenue Kléber, and that it was somewhere near eleven o'clock when my fiacre, homeward bound, rolled smoothly up the long, straight reach of the Rue de Rennes.

I have said that it was spring. There was a soft, warm little breeze that bore down the street and pressed against my face. There were odours abroad, the night was full of them, the scent of green things waking to life, of the little, sticky chestnut buds that were just pushing out from branch and twig—they would be great cones of fragrant blossoms in a fortnight; of starting leaves and quickened sod; and everywhere the heavy fragrance of lilacs newly in flower. It stirred the blood, sent it mounting like wine to one's head, set one's heart to jumping, filled one with a vague unrest.

"The world's too tame!" said I, taking a long breath and throwing out my arms. "There's no romance left in it—not even here in romantic Paris. Who could be romantic in an opera-hat and a dress-coat? One needs silk breeches and shoe-buckles and a wig and a sword." I raised my stick and regarded it with disfavour. "Fancy carrying about a silly little bit of wood like that!" said I morosely. "What's the good of it? It's not even ornamental, and I've no impediment in my gait. Romance is dead. I'd like to fight a duel or—or overthrow a kingdom, or run off with somebody's beautiful bride who had fallen in love with me at sight; but I can't, just because it's the nineteenth century, and because this thing's a stick and not a sword." And I shook the cane again disgustedly.

"It's not fair," I complained to the night at large. "It's not fair to stir up a chap so, to put the spring in his blood—all those lilacs and—and things, if—if you're not going to give him some little outlet. Jove! what air! It's atmospheric poetry.

"Cocher!" said I. The cocher pulled up.

"Je m'ennui de ce monde-ci, cocher," I explained. "There's nothing of romantic in it—except me. There is nothing of—poetical, of—of je ne sais quoi. Can you take me somewhere where I can find romance?"

The cocher smiled affably and made a beautiful gesture with both hands and his two eyes, a gesture that seemed to say: "But find Monsieur a romance? Nom d'un chien! It is of an unbelievable easiness. Leave everything to me." He was a funny little man, pot-bellied, red of nose and scanty grey of hair. He had no teeth to speak of.

"Monsieur would be thinking of the Boulevard St. Michel?" he suggested with confidence.

"No," said I firmly, "Monsieur would be thinking of no such thing. The Boul' Miche' is not in the least romantic, and you know it. It's only absurd and squalid and mercenary. Romantic? Great Heaven! Here, set me down at a café—any old café—the d'Alençon. I tell you there's no more romance ici-bas."

I got down sadly at the Café d'Alençon in the Place de Rennes. The dial high over the big façade of the Gare Montparnasse said

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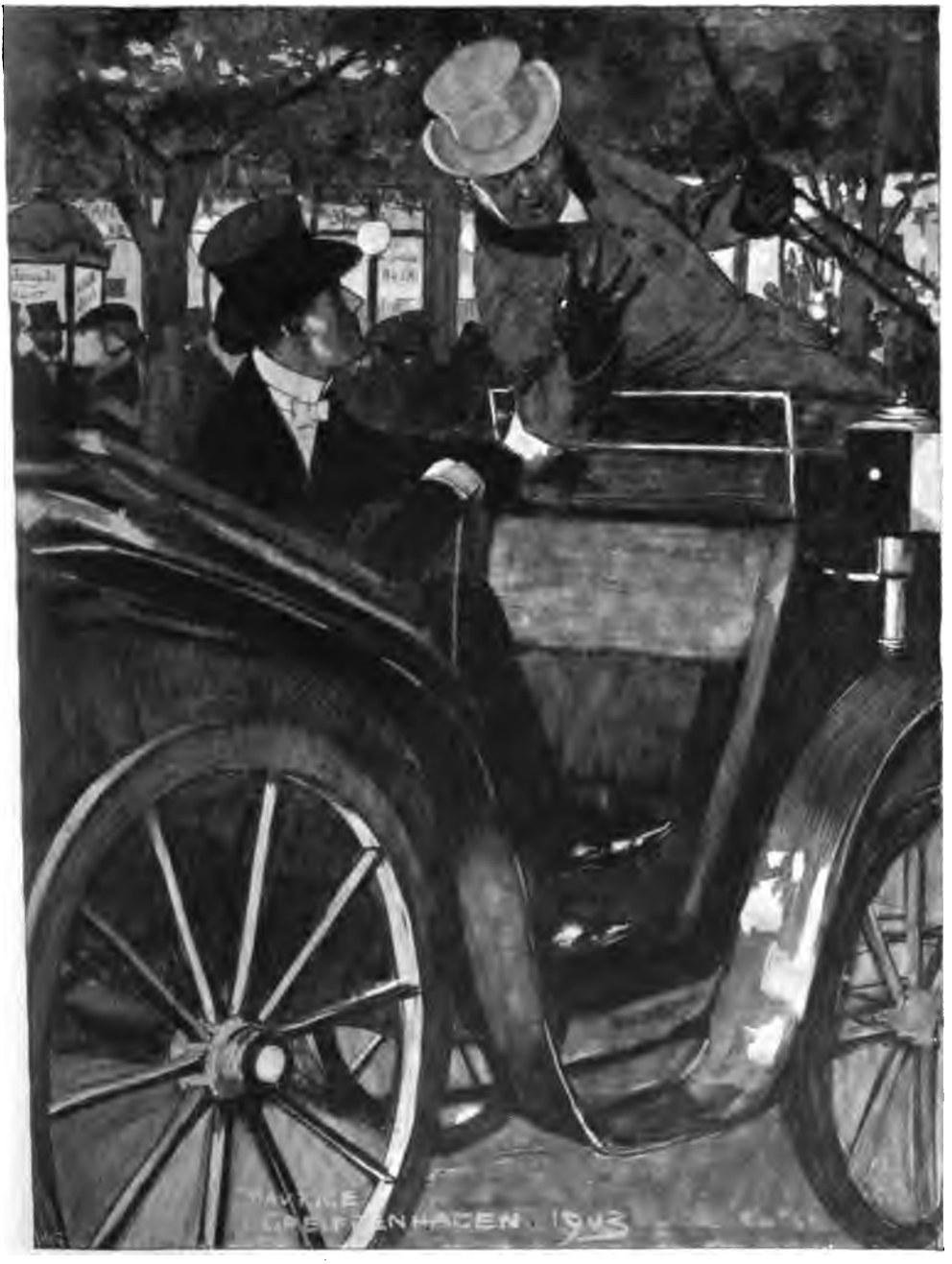

"'Monsieur would be thinking of the Boulevard St. Michel?'"

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eleven-fifteen. The terrasse of the café, brilliant under its spluttering lights, was nearly full, and M. Thuriet, fat, smiling, comfortable, beamed a presiding diety from the background. He said that M. Livingstone and M. Rogers had been in earlier, and had gone, but that there were deux ou trois Anglais still within; for example, the grand Monsieur who had come with Monsieur hier soir, Mac-Mac -quelque chose.

"Ah!" said I, "MacKenzie! Sir Gavin MacKenzie." But certainly, M. MacKenzie, together with another étranger—non, pas Anglais, Italien peut-être, Autrichien one would have a certain difficulty in saying.

I went inside, made my bow to Madame the Dame du Comptoir, exalted upon her throne, and looked about the room.

There were few at the little tables; nearly everyone had chosen the soft, scented air outside under the awning; but Sir Gavin was sitting over in the far corner, behind a glass of whisky-and-water. No French concoctions for MacKenzie. And with him was the other étranger—Italien peut-'tre, Autrichien one would have a certain difficulty in saying.

"No, not Italian," said I to myself; "Austrian possibly." Yes, one would have a certain difficulty in saying. He would be about forty, from appearances, though his head and MacKenzie's were of an equal greyness, and MacKenzie was a good fifty or more. But the other man's skin looked younger than his hair would warrant. There were none of the creases that age furrows in the neck, under the ears, or across the forehead or in the cheeks. To be sure, his face was lined strongly; but with vicissitude, one would say, not years. He had great, dark eyes under extraordinarily bushy and prominent brows, and the skin under and about them was dark. He had a jutting nose, strong and hawklike, and a mouth that shut to a firm, hard line over a jaw which said "Danger!" His cheeks were lean, hollowed a bit under the bone, and across one there was a sabre scar. He wore a small, grizzled moustache, and his hair—grey, as I have said—was scant above the temples. He would not be above medium height, but he had a most singular breadth of shoulders. He made a curious contrast to MacKenzie's square, Scotch bulk and professional, closely cropped, mutton-chop whisker.

I hesitated a moment over joining the two in their corner, but turned away with a little laugh upon receiving from Sir Gavin a curt and most ungenial nod.

"MacKenzie's something on his mind," said I, settling myself at a table. "He's most unusually glum, and so is the other chap—— Oh! anything—I don't care what—Grand Marnier, I think," to the waiter.

I saw MacKenzie speak to his companion, who turned and favoured me with the keenest glance of scrutiny I remember ever to have received.

"Oh! I'm quite harmless, my friend," said I over my little glass of Grand Marnier; "I wouldn't hurt a cat, and I've committed no crimes that I can recall at the moment."

The two conferred an instant, heads together, and then MacKenzie raised a beckoning finger. I told the waiter to bring over my glass, and crossed to the corner.

"Creighton," said the Scotsman, "allow me to present you to Colonel von Altdorf."

The Colonel rose and made a ceremonious little bow, heels together. I tried to look as impressive. Then, when we were seated, no one seemed inclined to say anything. The settled gloom upon the faces of MacKenzie and Colonel von Altdorf remained unlightened—indeed, if anything, it seemed to grow more deep.

"Beautiful evening," said I firmly, after a silence that bade fair to last the night out.

"Yes, yes—shockin'," said MacKenzie absently.

"But it's all wasted," I grieved, with a sigh. "What's the good of springtime coming, anyhow? Nobody cares any more. It just stirs your blood up a bit, but you don't do anything. I was thinking, on my way up just now, that spring's a mere exasperation. Nobody wants it. There's no more romance in the world."

Colonel von Altdorf gave a short laugh.

"Oh! isn't there?" said he.

I looked from his face to MacKenzie's. There had been a certain significance in the tone.

MacKenzie clinked the bit of ice in his long glass and frowned down upon it thoughtfully. Then he drew a long breath and met my eyes.

"Creighton," said he, smiling a little, "you did me a good turn once——"

"Ah!" said I, reddening; "as for that, it wasn't of any——" but MacKenzie raised his hand.

"An' you did it," he proceeded, "by suggestin' a way out of a deeficulty. I may say, a brilliant way," he added. "Have ye your wits about you to-night, man? for there is a deeficulty ready for your solvin' that's too much for my brain—an' too much

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for Von Altdorf's here, into the bargain, diplomatist though he is."

"Why," said I, "I'm no barrister, and I'm no writer of melodramas, either, that I should be able to solve difficulties at the drop of the handkerchief. But what's your trouble, Sir Gavin? At least let's hear it."

MacKenzie shook his head and made a little, helpless gesture with his two hands.

"'Tis no trouble o' mine," said he—"that is, in a way o' speakin'. Indirectly, it's bound to be a trouble to all of us who're concerned." He nodded to Colonel von Altdorf.

"Tell him, man," said he.

Von Altdorf rested his elbows upon the edge of the little table, hands clasped among the glasses, and turned his deep-set eyes upon mine. When he spoke, it was in excellent English, but with an accent, a dwelling upon sibilants, an alien value of dentals and gutturals too slight to be reproducible.

"Do you know where Novodnia is, Mr. Creighton?" said he.

"I do," said I. "It's on the Lower Danube, all mixed up with Roumania and Servia and Bulgaria and the rest. It's the littlest one, isn't it? Poor dear! Russia will gobble it some day."

"Precisely," said Colonel von Altdorf, unsmiling. "Precisely! Russia will gobble it some day; but Russia hasn't gobbled it yet, my friend. It would, perhaps, have been better for certain people if she had. Very well; if you know that much, you may possibly know that a certain prince of the dominant house in Novodnia has recently, through a most extraordinary and improbable series of deaths, come to the throne."

"Carol III.?" said I.

"Precisely," agreed Von Altdorf again. "Carol III. sits upon the seat of his fathers. May he long sit there! But the point is this. I have said that he came to the throne through an extraordinary series of deaths. Indeed, so improbable was his succession considered that it was never thought of at all, that he was allowed to marry outside of royal circles."

"The deuce!" said I. "You begin to complicate matters."

"Being without fortune," continued Colonel von Altdorf, "the Prince at last married a young American woman of great beauty, I understand, and of tremendous wealth; his idea being, of course, to establish himself in the state which his rank permitted but his lack of fortune forbade."

"And then," said I—"why, then, no sooner was he married than occurred this improbable series of deaths which brought him to the throne and—face to face with an extremely embarrassing problem."

"You state it," said Colonel von Altdorf, "with brevity and point. His wife being not of royal rank—indeed, a commoner—his children by her could not succeed to the throne."

"There remained then," said I, "but one course. The marriage had to be regarded as a morganatic one, and a princess of the proper extraction provided."

Colonel von Altdorf smiled.

"We get on," said he, with a little inclination of his head. "But right at this point—if I may continue the tale—arose an amazing and most unlooked-for obstacle in the path of what might have been considered an embarrassing, but surely not an unsurmountable difficulty. The Prince, if you like, refused point blank either to divorce his wife or to marry again in his own rank."

"The devil!" said I.

"My sentiments exactly," observed Colonel von Altdorf.

"But there is more to come, if I mistake not?" I protested.

Colonel von Altdorf smiled again.

"It is a matter of gratification to me," he said, "that you happened into the Café d'Alençon this evening. You have not a slow mind. Yes, there is more to come. Fate, my friend, when she takes it into her head to play a momentous trick, plays it most thoroughly to the end. She's a good sportswoman, Fate. I've seen her play strange games. Aye, and I've taken a hand with her at times, but I've never seen her yet in so wholly wanton a mood as this.

"The marriage of which we have been speaking took place in America, at a watering-place not far from New York, I believe—a place called Newport, where the young American woman's family had a large summer château. The ceremony was, of course, solemnised in a church, at some little distance from the château. But while the newly married pair were being driven from the church to a fête which was to follow, the horses attached to the bridal landau took fright at the passing of a motor-car and ran away, finally dashing the landau to pieces against an iron column, a street-lamp, I understand. The Prince escaped with a few bruises; his wife, on the contrary——"

"Not dead? not dead?" I cried, leaning forward over the little table.

"His wife, on the contrary," said Von

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Altdorf, "was severely injured—injured as to the head. Her injuries were so severe, in fact," he continued, turning the little liqueur-glass slowly in his hand and staring down upon it, "that she was still in a condition of unconsciousness and delirium when, a fortnight later, the Prince was called home to Novodnia upon the sudden death of his father and brothers by the malignant fever which swept the entire family."

"And since?" I cried. "Since? Get on with it, Colonel! What has happened since?"

"Why," said Colonel von Altdorf, "the most extraordinary part of it has happened since. The Prince's wife, struck down so cruelly, as it were upon the altar steps, recovered from her injuries in a month's time—bodily."

"Bodily?" said I, in a half whisper; "bodily? Why—why, you don't mean she's——"

"The blow being upon the head," continued Von Altdorf, "has in some manner—for information upon which I must refer you to our friend the physician here—so acted upon her brain that, upon her bodily recovery, it was found she had completely lost her memory of recent events—of any event, indeed, later in occurrence than a year back."

"Good Heavens!" I cried. "Then she didn't know she had been married? She didn't remember the Prince at all?"

"The unfortunate lady had, alas! no recollection whatever of anything connected with her marriage or her acquaintance with the Prince. She would not know him if she were to meet him face to face.

"Of course, she was told of her marriage; that had to be done, though at the expense of a great nervous shock; but as she grew no better, the family deemed it the wisest plan to bring her to Europe—to place her, in short, under the personal care of the greatest doctor living. They brought her to Sir Gavin here, and Sir Gavin is devoting his exclusive attention to her treatment."

"What! here?" said I; "here in Paris?"

"Where else?" demanded Colonel von Altdorf.

Now, MacKenzie had, as I knew, taken, six months before. that great triangle of garden which is comprised between the Boulevard Raspail, the Rue Denfert Rochereau, and the little impasse called the Rue Boissonade. The triangle extends, from its base along the Rue Boissonade, nearly to the Place du Lion de Belfort, and belonged at one time to a convent of importance, whose quaint, mediæval buildings, set near the point of the triangle, and opening upon the Rue Denfert Rochereau, MacKenzie had made habitable and refurnished with some comfort. As for the garden, high-walled from the streets, there is no finer in old Paris.

It was here, then, that the unfortunate lady must be living, a scant half mile from where we sat in the Café d'Alençon.

"And she's better?" I asked. "She'll recover?"

MacKenzie dropped a fist upon the little table, and the glasses jumped and rattled.

"She's no better," said he, "nor will be, if I know my trade. There are things too secret for human skill, man, things that lie on the gods' knees and must ever be so. The poor lady will never have back her year of memory unless it be by some miracle that's beyond our own ken. But just now we are brought face to face with a new problem. The lady, so soon as she was informed of her marriage, began to express a most lively interest in her unknown husband, an interest which has grown—she is still in a nervous state, too delicate to be trifled with, ye'll understand—to such a degree that we're at our wits' end. She fancies—poor body! that we're in a league to keep him from her, and won't understand why he can't be produced. She's rapidly working herself to the point o' dementia again; an' unless something can be done within the next few days, I'll not answer for consequences."

"And he?" said I—"the Prince? He's là-bas, I suppose, in Novodnia?"

"Aye," said Von Altdorf. "He's at home, where he can't be spared, struggling to keep the throne of his fathers under his body, and to prevent those pestilent Pavelovitches from sitting in his seat, as they'd give their souls to do, curse them!"

"Ah!" said I. "There's another dynasty weary for a throne to sit upon? Pavelovitch? I seem to recollect the name."

"They're the Russian party," growled Von Altdorf. "And may the devil take his own! There'd be no independence in Novodnia with a Pavelovitch on the throne. God knows there's little enough anyhow! No, Prince Karl mustn't leave the country now; it would be next to fatal. Yet, alas! if he doesn't leave, it must be next to fatal to the loveliest lady alive—God pity her! It's a nation against a woman. Mr. Creighton, they say you're good at riddles. Read me this one. It's too deep for such as I."

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"Smiling down upon us all the cheery, confidential smile of intoxication."

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I shook my head.

"Dites donc, garçon!" said I. "Another Grand Marnier. And for M. le Docteur another whisky à l'eau, and for M. le Colonel a grog americain. Alas! Colonel, I'm no reader of riddles. The Prince, you say, can't come to Paris?"

"He mustn't," declared Von Altdorf, frowning. "Heaven knows he would if he could! I'm in daily terror of his turning up, malgré tout—such terror that I've taken pains to make him a virtual prisoner là-bas. No, the Prince can't come."

"And the Prin—and Madame," said I, "has no memory of the Prince; would not know him from—from me, for example?"

"Why, no," agreed Von Altdorf, watching me curiously; "no, she wouldn't know him from you, man, or me. What, then, my riddle reader?"

"Then," I cried, "it would seem to me, gentlemen, that the only thing to do—minding always that Madame's reason is at stake, perhaps her very life, and that desperate situations demand desperate remedies—it would seem to me that the only thing to do is—to create a temporary Prince here in Paris—wait, wait!—only, of course, till Madame is so restored in health and mental equilibrium that she can bear to be told the truth, gently, very gently, and prepared for what is before her."

"Great Heavens!" said Von Altdorf softly, and stared at me wide-eyed. The glass of steaming grog that he held beat a sort of tattoo upon the marble top of the little table. "Great Heavens!" said he again.

Sir Gavin MacKenzie had been striking a match to light the great black meerschaum that hung from his mouth. The match flared and twisted and burned down till it scorched his unheeding fingers, but Sir Gavin's eyes were upon my face, narrowed a bit, very steady, and Sir Gavin's brows were gathered into a knot over his nose. I think that none of us spoke for several minutes, but each stared at the others, weighing the thing in mind, counting the gain and loss.

"I'm no sure but ye have it, man," said the doctor at last. He spoke in a half whisper, and his eyes questioned Colonel von Altdorf. He had quite forgotten the unlighted pipe.

Von Altdorf drank half his long glass of steaming grog. The glass clicked against his teeth.

"Aye," said he gruffly, "very clever and very bold; but who's to do it? It's no easy task, mind you,"

MacKenzie leaned forward.

"Now, there's you," he suggested persuasively. "Me she knows, of course, but there's you. You'd know all the tricks, too."

"Not for a crown in heaven!" cried the other. "I've been a diplomatist all my life, and it's likely I've no character left me, but I want to die a comparatively honest man. Not for a crown in heaven, my friend."

"Or you," said MacKenzie, turning to me. "'Tis your plan—do you play it out."

"Not I," I declared with some vigour. "I'll make you schemes, if you like, but I'll play no blackguard for you nor anyone else, MacKenzie."

"And there we are," mourned the Scotsman. "'Tis the only possible way, rash and desperate though it be, an' there's no one to play the part. A gentleman—in a manner o' speakin'—we must have, but no gentleman would do the thing. A rascal will never serve our use. Man, why need ye spoil our peace o' mind with your mad schemes? I shall be thinking o' nothing else."

And we sat all three shaking our heads most ruefully, for in truth there seemed no way out of the impasse.

CHAPTER II.

THERE came a chorus of shouts and laughter from the loungers upon the terrasse without, a snatch of maudlin song in a voice I seemed to know, and a very tall young man broke into the room, tacking like a yacht in a heavy sea, and hove to with a sudden lurch before the throne of the majestic Dame du Comptoir that faced the door.

"Beautiful lady!" cried the young man, gazing passionately up into the alarmed countenance of the patronne, and making a theatrical gesture of hand to heart, "beautiful lady, be not 'f-fraid! 'S only—me! Light that 'tracts moths 'n' lil' bugs t' flutter round it 'tracted me 'way from Boulevard St. G'main—— Couldn' stop 'way f'm you." And he swept her a bow that nearly dragged his black curls in the dust of the floor, the very caricature of a bow, such as one might see upon a music-hall stage or in a farce comedy.

"Oh—oh—oh, fair! oh, sweet!"

said he tearfully—

"When I do l-look on thee,
In whom all joys so well agree,
Heart 'n' soul do sing in me."

Upon my word, the rascal might have made his fortune on the stage. He had a

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voice of a quality, of a resonance, of a timbre! A voice to wring tenderness from a plaster cast.

I have said that he was a very tall young man. He had a singularly lithe, supple figure, slender at waist and hips, but very broad in the shoulders. He might have been a 'varsity oarsman. He wore no beard or moustache, but the hair upon his head was black and waving, almost curly, and random locks of it fell down over his forehead nearly to the straight brows. He had a pair of merry grey eyes, deep-set, and a mouth that seemed to have been forced into a sternness of line unnatural to it, despite the firm, square jaw beneath. His smile was the smile of a child—I have never known anyone who could resist it—but about his eyes were circles and lines of ill-living that never would be wholly erased. He looked a strange mixture of opposites, of warring elements, this drunken young reprobate with the thrilling voice, who pressed his heart under his two hands and quoted the late Sir Philip Sydney to a buxom and perturbed Frenchwoman who couldn't understand.

"Mais tenez, tenez!" cried the patronne, at last, laughing and holding her ears. "Allez-vous-en, M. Mallory! Vous m'embarrassez."

The tall young man turned away with a gloomy wave of the hand and gazed abstractedly down the room. He caught my eye for a moment and bowed with an impressive dignity.

"Drunken swine!" growled MacKenzie. "Who is he?"

"Why," said I, looking after the tall young man, who had seated himself at one of the little tables by the opposite wall, "why, he's a queer lot, a most uncommon queer lot. His name is Mallory—Denis Mallory—and he comes, I'm told, of a very good family indeed, somewhere in Ulster—— He's Irish, of course—— He was a sub. in a cavalry regiment at one time, but he got himself into some sort of a scrape, ran up debts that his governor couldn't or wouldn't pay off, and he had to sell out. I fancy it broke him up a good bit, made him lose his grip, for he's been a pretty fairly hard lot ever since. That happened five or six years ago. He's been the approved type of soldier of fortune for the most part—the sort you read about in the story-books. He's fought from Venezuela to South Africa, and from the Sudan to China. There's no doubt that he's a good soldier, and I greatly fear there's little doubt that he's a good nothing else. Yes, he's the approved type of chevalier d'industrie, such as you read of, with the difference that he's no better off for his adventures. The story-book heroes have always a breast covered with medals, and a fortune amassed. Poor Mallory has neither. I suppose there is no man in Paris to-day who has fought in more little wars, braved more diverse dangers—or made love to more women, and yet he's what you see over there—a dissolute young reprobate, with the soul of a poet, the tongue of an angel, the record of a César de Bazan, and seldom a franc to bless himself with. He ekes out a hand-to-mouth existence, I'm told, by writing sketches for some London journal. Aye, aye, he's a queer lot, a most uncommon queer lot! Everyone knows him here, and everyone despises him, and yet—why, curiously enough—everyone has a sneaking fondness for him, too. He's a rogue if you like, but a debonair rogue, it can't be denied. Moreover, he's not a scoundrel, you'll understand, dissipated though he be. He's still, in a way, a gentleman. No one ever knew him to lie or take an unfair advantage."

MacKenzie shook a heavy head.

"A wasted life," said he. "A man o' parts to wreck himself for the love o' excitement an' drink! 'Tis a sad case."

Colonel von Altdorf was leaning forward, elbows upon the little table among the glasses, and fingers absently stroking his grizzled moustache. There was a curious expression upon his face—a most curious expression. His eyes, narrowed a bit, were upon young Denis Mallory across the room.

All at once his thought burst upon my mind. It was as if he had spoken it by word. I met his eyes excitedly, and for an instant the thing seemed possible.

"Our man," said Von Altdorf quietly.

"Ah, no, no!" I cried. "He—he wouldn't do it. Why, man, it's almost a blackguard's trick, imposing upon a helpless woman so. I've told you that he's still in a way a gentleman. He'd never play a trick upon a woman. No, no, it's out of the question. I was mad to suggest such a scheme; it couldn't be done—Mallory wouldn't do it, anyhow."

"It's got to be done," said Colonel von Altdorf from between closed teeth. "I tell you we're in a desperate way. It's playing a trick upon a woman to save her reason. You don't appreciate the state she's in. It's a desperate game, but it's the only one to be played, and your young adventurer yonder is the man to play it. After all, it's no such

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blackguardly thing, and what responsibility there is will be shared amongst us all. If he plays the part, it's we who lead him to it. And the lady shall be told the truth so soon as she's able to bear it."

I took a long breath.

"It's not to my liking," said I; but I caught young Mallory's eye across the room and raised a beckoning hand.

He came over to our table a bit unsteadily, tacking as before, like a yacht in a heavy sea, and stood with a hand upon the back of a chair, smiling down upon us all the cheery, confidential smile of intoxication—save that with him it had a certain personal quality, a magnetism, a sort of sweetness.

"Mallory," said I, "I want to present you to Sir Gavin MacKenzie, and to Colonel von Altdorf, of the Novodnian service."

Young Mallory bowed easily to Sir Gavin and saluted Von Altdorf with an instinctive drawing up, a stiffening into military carriage. Then he lurched into a chair and smiled again.

"A congress o' n-nations, gentlemen," said he. "A c-conference o' the Powers. 'Pon my—my faith! you'll not find four races in four men gathered around one table every day. Scotland——" He beamed groggily upon Sir Gavin. "Hoots, mon! will ye no' dance us a fling?"

MacKenzie stiffened in his chair, but I hacked at his shins under the table, and he sank back again.

"England," said young Mallory, and wagged a sorrowful head at me. "Oh, man! had you the sins o' your country upon your head this night, it's heavy you'd be! Novodnia—may she never go to fatten the White Bear's belly!" There was a fervent "Amen!" from Von Altdorf. "An' old Ireland, God bless her green shores! What? a drink, did you say, Creighton? No man can boast he's heard me cry 'Nay!' to that call. A litt'e wine for me stomach's sake. Egad! 'tis naught else I've had for me stomach's sake since the morning. Here, garçon, make that wine absinth—Pernod, man, an' look sharp! I'm in need of it."

"Great Heaven, Mallory!" said I, "do you mean to say you've eaten nothing since morning? You're drinking on an empty stomach? Why, it's suicide! Absinth, too, and in the evening! Here, garçon, deux sandwiches pour mousier, tout à l'instant!"

He fell upon the sandwiches when they came, most ravenously—huge, thick, and unpalatable though they were—and never paused until he had finished them.

The three of us watched him in silence. Then, when he had made an end, he drew himself up with a little sigh of comfort.

"Bad manners, gentlemen," said he, smiling again. He seemed more himself; the food had taken off the edge of his intoxication. "Bad manners, I grant you—but faith! I needed the sandwiches. By some extraordinary mischance I neglected to lunch or dine. I forget the reason—— Ah, yes, 'twas a poor little devil of a model out of work, who needed the dinner worse than I. An' then—why, then, what with a pair of absinths on an empty stomach—or maybe three—I—I went off the hook just a wee bit. It may be that I'm a trifle screwed, just a trifle; but you'll not mind—'tis an accident, not a habit."

He caught up the tumbler of opalescent, greenish-yellow liquor that stood at his elbow, and smiled upon it fondly.

"My only friend," said he in that wonderful, deep, tender voice of his—upon my word, he might have been making love speeches to a sweetheart.

"The only friend out o' them all who's stood by me, good times and bad. You've never failed me yet. Gentlemen, I've wandered and I've fought from Caracas to Ladysmith, and from Khartum to Tien Tsin, and I've chummed up with more people than I dare say; but on my faith in Heaven—if I've any left—there's never a man o' them has stuck by me, never a woman but's played me false." He smiled down upon the glinting liquor in the glass.

"To the green devil, gentlemen!" he cried, "the green devil who stands by me, fair weather or foul, who slaps me on the shoulder when I'm down on my luck, who takes me by the hand and leads me into Paradise when the world's bitterest. To the little green devil who's a great green god—may he ever reign!"

He tilted the glass till there remained but half its charge, and dropped back in his chair with his chin upon his breast.

I leaned over the table and laid a hand upon his arm.

"Mallory," said I, "Mallory!" and shook the arm gently. "Pull together a bit, man, there's work forward. There's a great game afoot—a risky game, Mallory, a desperate game such as you love. It wants a clear head and a ready tongue—aye, and a ready arm, too, maybe—in the event of certain contingencies. A bold man's wanted; come, are you with us?"

"My only friend," said young Mallory,

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shaking his head sadly. "The little green devil who's a great green god. Aye, a great green god." His voice died away in murmurings, and his eyes saw beyond us, far beyond the Café d'Alençon—into Paradise, perhaps.

I looked at MacKenzie in despair, but MacKenzie was writing upon the back of a visiting-card. He beckoned a waiter.

"The pharmacy at the foot of the Avenue du Maine," said he, "and quickly."

The distance was short, and the man was back in a few moments with a small vial, red labelled. MacKenzie poured a few drops of the liquid into a wineglass of water. It sent up a keen and pungent odour as of ammonia.

"Drink this," said he, setting the glass before young Mallory. And Mallory drank, his eyes still beyond us, far beyond the Café d'Alençon.

But in a moment his eyes returned, narrowed, frowned a bit. He turned to the Scotsman curiously.

"Why, 'tis a queer drink, your liquor, man; uncommon nasty—and I owe you small thanks; you've waked me from a most delightful reverie."

He smiled across at me.

"You spoke of a game, Creighton," he said, "a desperate game. I heard all your words, but—well, the fact is, I was in heaven at the moment, and returning was not to be thought of. A game, my boy? Let's hear it. I'm none so sure but I'm tired of games. Out with it."

I glanced at MacKenzie and Von Altdorf, and they nodded. And then, very briefly, and holding his eyes with mine, I told young Mallory all the story of Prince Karl of Novodnia and of the unhappy lady who had been made his wife. Once, during the tale, he shoved the wineglass towards MacKenzie, never taking his eyes from mine, and MacKenzie dropped into it a few drops of the pungent fluid from his little vial, filled it up with water, and nodded approvingly when the Irishman drank.

"And so, you see, Mallory," I concluded, "there's but the one thing to be done—a desperate thing, maybe, and God knows how it may fall out, but the only thing."

For a long time after I finished he sat silent, staring at the wall and chafing his two hands together gently, as they rested upon the table's edge; but he wandered in no reveries this time, he peeped into no heavens led by his great green god. His face seemed to have changed to that of another man—keen, frowning a bit, close-mouthed, and thoughtful.

I saw Von Altdorf's eyes glisten excitedly, and even old MacKenzie's face had gained a bit of eager colour.

"Yes," said young Mallory at last, nodding his head. "Yes, you have the trick. It's the only thing to do; though, as you've said, God knows how it may fall out. It's the only thing—an' now, who's to do it?"

"Why—why, *you*, man!" I cried. "Why, you, of course; didn't you understand? You're the only one could carry it through."

He stared at me an instant amazedly.

"I?" said he; "I?" with a little unbelieving laugh. "Come, man, you're joking. You don't mean it seriously? *I* do the thing? Oh, I say!" and he burst out in a roar of laughter that died away quickly. I could see the swift course of his thoughts as well as if he had spoken them. I could see him picturing the possibilities of the scheme, balancing its risks, gloating over its dangers. It was just the reckless enterprise to take his fancy, as I had known before I called him across the room.

Then all at once his face became puzzled.

"But—but, I say!" he cried, "why didn't one of you go in for the part? Why did you drag me into it? Why not you, Creighton, or you, Colonel von Altdorf? I don't quite understand."

"Why, you see," said I, stammering a bit and turning colour, "I've no doubt, you see, I—I couldn't do it, because——" But MacKenzie interrupted me.

"There are excellent reasons," said he. "No use going into them. You are the man to do it, Mr. Mallory. You're used to deeficult situations an' dangers. Let be at that! Now, we'll make it a business matter. We stand ready to offer you - no, wait, wait a bit, man!—to offer you one thousand francs a month for your services. That will do away with your havin' to follow your regular vocation; for we could not think of bringin' you into the affair, that is none of yours, on other grounds."

The angry flush died slowly away from young Mallory's face as he considered.

"Why, to be sure," said he thoughtfully, "I've my living to make, such as it is, and this will let me out of that cursed newspaper work for a bit. A thousand a month—forty quid!—why, that's a luxury. And the checker game again—lives and deaths. By the saints! it gives me a genuine thrill. A quick eye and a ready hand and a mind looking three ways at once. Done, by the

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gods! *done*, gentlemen! I'm your man." And he laughed aloud joyously and put out a hand to MacKenzie over the table. But MacKenzie was busy with the big meerschaum just then.

As for Von Altdorf, he was suddenly engaged in rolling a cigarette, which seemed to demand his whole attention. And I—oh! I take no pride in telling it now—I was doing something wholly unnecessary to my cravat. And my cheeks burned red. I was not grown old in such matters like MacKenzie and Von Altdorf.

Young Mallory looked at our faces quickly in turn, then down at his outstretched hand and up again. He frowned a little, and his eyes were puzzled, hurt like a child's. He drew the hand back to him slowly, and touched it with the other as if he thought there must be something wrong with it.

"Why—gentlemen," he said, in a little surprised, stammering tone, "I—I don't under——" Then all at once he halted and remained silent for a long time. His face flushed crimson and paled again.

"Ah!" said he at last, very low, "I think I—see—I'm the—cat's paw! You wouldn't do the thing yourselves, it's too—low. It's a bit of dirty work that you think no gentleman could bring himself to, so you wouldn't do it; and—and you won't take the hand of the man who will do the thing. You were looking for a—a blackguard, and you—chose me!"

He dropped his face into his hands for an instant. I think I have never seen such shame, such humiliation, in any eyes. I couldn't bear to meet them.

"You—chose *me?*" said he again, in a half whisper. "Why, it *is* a rather blackguardly thing to do, isn't it, deceiving a woman? She'd trust us — me, utterly, wouldn't she? She wouldn't have a suspicion. She'd be happy, I expect, beautifully happy with it all, till - till she was told. Oh, it's damnable!" He caught up the half-filled tumbler of absinth and drained it at a gulp. "Damnable!" said he a little thickly, "damnable!"

Then, after a moment, he began to laugh, and his eyes grew heavy and a bit glazed once more.

It was as if MacKenzie's drug had held him for the few moments and then given way, all in an instant, at the first touch of the drink.

"Come, come, gentlemen," said he, "we mustn't quarrel. Li'l' children love one 'nother. We've got work to do among us. You think I'm no—no gen'leman. I don't care. Gimme my forty quid a month an' I'll do the work."

He made a sudden frowning effort to pull himself together and turned about to MacKenzie with a certain dignity.

"You—your logic, sir, is a bit beyond me," said he. "If it's blackguardly for me to do the thing, I can't see but it's—it's blackguardly in you to countenance it. When do you—when do you wish to commence?"

"We will commence," said the Scotsman, "at once, to-morrow. Every day's delay is a pressing danger." He looked down at the glasses before him. Even old MacKenzie couldn't meet the Irishman's eyes just then. "As for your—your suspicions of our—attitude towards you, you're quite wrong, of course, of course. We're equally responsible with you in everything. Now listen carefully, please. You will be presented to—Madame, your wife—*your* wife, you understand?—by me. You will spend an hour or two of each day with her, at my house or in the garden, as she may prefer. The short interview will be explained to her on the grounds of her weak state and nervous condition. Of course, as a matter of fact, she will neither expect nor wish for more at the present, since you'll meet, ye understan', in a way o' speakin' as strangers. She'll not remember you. When she's well enough and strong enough, the whole thing shall be explained to her. My place, in case ye don't know, is the old convent property with the big garden, between the Rue Denfert Rocherean and the Boulevard Rasfail."

Young Mallory caught at the edge of the table.

"What?" he cried sharply. "What? Say that again, man! The big garden that backs upon the Rue Boissonade?"

"The same," nodded MacKenzie.

"Great Heavens!" said the Irishman softly, and his eyes were round and strange.

"Wait—wait! And the - the Princess walks—sometimes - in the garden—tall, very beautiful—brown bronze hair?"

"Well?" queried Sir Gavin.

"Why, I—I have a—sort of studio in the Rue Boissonade!" said young Mallory. It was as if he spoke to himself.

"I've seen the—Princess. I won't do it!" he cried suddenly. "By Heaven, I'm no blackguard, and you shan't make me one! I've done queer things in queer places, and I'm not proud of my life or of what I've done with it; but by my faith! I'll not play a

"'Eleanor!' said he,"

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scurvy trick upon that woman, of all people in the world."

"You've agreed to do it," said MacKenzie quietly. "And if you don't do it, that woman will very probably go mad in a week's or a fortnight's time."

Young Mallory's elbows were upon the little table, and his head was between his hands.

"It's fate," said he in a whisper. "By my soul! it's fate, and none o' my doing. Actually to know her, touch her hand, look in her eyes! And Heaven knows how it will all fall out!—I tell you it's fate! I'll do your work, sir, you never fear. Here, waiter, an absinth—and look sharp!"

MacKenzie put out a protesting hand, but the Irishman turned upon him savagely.

"Sir!" he cried, and MacKenzie, no coward if you like, shrank back in his chair. "Sir! you're buying my services for your forty quid a month, not my person nor my soul! If I choose to take a drink, by my faith, I'll take it!" He dashed the water in upon the yellow liquor and gulped it down. Then, in a moment, his chin dropped forward upon his breast, and he babbled of little green devils and great green gods and of sights and sounds of Paradise.

MacKenzie shook his square Scotch head with a sigh. Colonel von Altdorf tugged moodily at his moustaches. There was a crease between his brows. In truth, our game seemed but ill opened, and the hand we held a weak one.

"Come, gentlemen," I cried, in a tone that strove to be cheery, "come, we do no good by sitting late! To our beds, all of us! Remember to-morrow!"

I clapped young Mallory upon the shoulder, and he rose with a jerk. He seemed not badly off. He walked with a fair steadiness, and held his tongue; but his eyes were heavy and glazed, the circles under them shockingly black, and the lines about his mouth showed, all at once, haggard and drawn. He turned and spoke to one of the waiters, who brought him presently, wrapped in a bit of newspaper—a lump of ice.

"What, going to keep it up at home, old man?" I cried. "Oh, I say! remember you've to-morrow to think of!"

"Eh?" said young Mallory, turning his sombre eyes upon me, "keep—keep what up? I've four hours' work to do yet, man. I've three thousand words to get out for my newspaper. The ice is to put in a towel and wrap my head in."

"But, great Heaven, lad!" cried MacKenzie, "you've no need to worry about newspapers now! Chuck them up. You're provided for."

Mallory wrapped the bit of paper more closely about his lump of ice and led the way out to the street.

"I promised them the thing," said he simply. "You wouldn't have me break my word? I think we walk the same way, sir. Are you ready?"

Von Altdorf and I stood under the awning of the terrasse and watched the two up the Boulevard Montparnasse.

"Wouldn't disappoint his paper because he'd given his word," mused Von Altdorf. "Going to sit up all night with ice on his head to keep a promise—and soaked in absinth from heels to hair! Oh, well, one lives and learns, my friend. Now, I should have said that man was impossible—out of a story-book. One lives and learns."

"I wish I'd shaken hands with him," said I.

"You'll wish that more heartily still before the last card's played," said Colonel von Altdorf. "Yonder's a man!"

CHAPTER III.

THE old convent garden by the Boulevard Raspail is a quaint, still place of coolness and of odour, of damp, black mould underfoot, mossy with age, of prim, orderly rows of trees and shrubs, of mellow sunshine splashed with shadows, of green isolation, of peace beyond belief; a walled quiet where the outer world never penetrates.

There are many such in old Paris, though few, perhaps, so large. They lie asleep behind those high, blank, stuccoed walls with spiked tops and a "Defense d'Afficher" printed black across them, that you pass in your walks or on top of your tooting tram. You may see the tops of the great trees peeping over the walls' coping; you may catch, if it be springtide, a great whiff of perfume, lilac or chestnut or acacia, borne out to you by some vagrant little puff of wind; but the mysteries that lie behind that fifteen feet of stone and plaster you may not solve, save, once in a long time, a tiny postern door set perchance in the high wall may be by accident left ajar. Then you shall see such old-world quiet, such ordered peace, such guarded sweetness!

The big convent garden is—as has been said—a triangle, with its apex and a portion of one side filled by the former convent buildings. Its sides that lie along the

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Boulevard Raspail and the Rue Denfert Rochereau are walled to a great height. No eye may spy upon that green seclusion. Its base is the blank, rear wall of the long, barrack-like row of studio buildings, two storeys high, that face in the Rue Boissonade. A blank, rear wall, I said. That is not quite true. There is—or was—one window, a small one, set—Heaven knows why—about ten feet from the ground of the garden below. It belongs to the studio at the end of the long row, at the inner end of the little street; for the Rue Boissonade is properly no rue at all, but an impasse. This studio was occupied, at the time of which I write, by young Denis Mallory, ex-soldier of fortune, present writer of descriptive articles for a London weekly paper.

A quaint, still place of coolness and odours. The odours came blended from everywhere —from the black earth, stained green, with moss here and there, and always damp, as in a cellar; from the rows of great lilac bushes that stand along the high street walls—when the lilacs are in flower the perfume is well-nigh stupefying; from the chestnuts and acacias that stand severely arow up and down the garden, their trunks black and smooth with years; from the mignonette and little spice pinks and red single roses that fill the round beds at the corners of the walls. There is a gravel walk down through the middle of all, with a border of little whitened stones, and another path that runs around the enclosure under the walls.

In the very centre is the fountain, of marble. It was white once, and fine with scrolls and ornamentation, but the marble is stained yellow and green with age, and the carved vines and leaves and fruit are broken. A living vine twists and clings triumphantly where the sculptor's challenged admiration so long ago. Doubtless the new vine is the better one. The carved stone margin of the basin is cracked, too, and stained; roots have forced their way between the joints, and moss has filled the bottom of the pool; but that doesn't matter so much, for only a gurgling spurt of water trickles down from the fount nowadays.

Even the marble seats, that stand in a broken circle about the fountain, are stained, cracked, and broken, and the sundial, uplifted near by on its pedestal, is hidden in a mass of vines.

You might sit here all the day long, if you liked, bathing yourself in the yellow sunshine that seems always warm but never hot, or hiding under the cool, green shade, breathing in a fragrance exquisite, aromatic, a blended essence of all delightful smells; and you would be as utterly out of the world, as far away from its noise and hurry and strife, as if you were alone in the Hesperides. It would be still, of a stillness unbelievable! No sounds would reach you from over those high stone walls but the toot of a passing tram, the tinkle of its bell, the whistle of a street gamin, the bell from a near-by chapel; and these made somehow thin and faint as if from a great distance, unreal and alien.

Ah! it's a good old place! A quaint old, sweet old place, the great green convent garden by the Boulevard Raspail!

* * * * *

Sir Gavin and young Denis Mallory stood in the grey stone porch, a beautiful old crumbling Gothic porch, of what had been the refectory of the convent. Young Mallory was a bit haggard from the night before, a bit pale and drawn as to the cheeks, and black as to the eyes, but otherwise quite himself; an earlier self, one would have said. There was a something of boyishness about him, a something of eagerness, a light in the eye; and his hand was not quite steady.

"Ye'll be careful, lad," warned MacKenzie. "Remember always that she's in a nervous state so extreme that it's nigh hysteria. Ye'll be cautious."

"Aye," said young Mallory impatiently. "Aye, haven't I been coached for two hours? I'm letter perfect." And his eyes strayed down the length of the garden below them.

MacKenzie heaved a great sigh.

"Heaven knows!" said he, shaking his great head. "Heaven knows! Eh, well! be off with ye, an' have it over."

Young Mallory went down the gravel path between the great chestnut trees.

It was one of those unseasonably warm afternoons that come sometimes at the end of April or early in May, a heat that forewarns the approaching summer, that makes the sunshine oppressive, draws the young leaves from their twigs almost while one watches them.

It had brought the sticky buds of the chestnut into flower all in a day, so that their fragrance, heavy and tropical, mingled with that of the passing lilacs, filled all the great, high-walled garden with scent. It was like a greenhouse.

Something moved down among the trees and shrubs beyond the fountain, something red and white, and young Mallory's heart

gave a sudden leap. Then in a moment he was before her.

She faced him, half startled, breathing quickly. She was tall, very tall, and moved regally, like a queen, in her white gown and long, crimson cloak. I fancy one saw her eyes first—after the majesty of her bearing. They were blue, a clouded, purplish blue, like—like nothing else in the world—southern seas, maybe, Italian lakes—midnight skies when she was troubled or thoughtful—very long, and at times wide, and deep-set under straight, level brows. She'd a slender, straight little nose, high bridged and tip tilted—oh, the very littlest bit in the world! She'd a mouth all soft curves, drooping at the corners, its upper lip quite absurdly short and curled outward, and overhanging greatly the lower one. Her chin—it was an English chin, I protest, not an American one—was pointed and clean-cut, and set forward prominently over the loveliest full throat that a sculptor could fancy. And her hair was brown a waving, crinkly brown, save where the sun fell upon it. There it was red bronze, a living fire. It was parted somewhere at one side, and heaped over her brows, and a great knot of it hung at the back of her neck. Ah! but there are no words for the sumptuous loveliness of her! for the poise of her beautiful head, for the lithe sway of her round waist. She was slender, I'd have you know, slender of waist, but very broad in the shoulders, as out-of-door young women sometimes are, deep-bosomed and flat-backed, pink as a rosy goddess, save when she was ill and suffering.

She showed her late desperate illness but little, outwardly. She was a bit pale, and her hands and cheeks were thinner than their wont—as we learned afterwards—but they were so perfectly modelled, so wonderful in line and contour, that they suffered for the lack of roundness hardly at all. There were faint, dark circles under her eyes, too. They showed when she turned her head a bit and looked away.

Her head was bent now, eyes under cover, and the stormy breathing would not be hidden. Young Mallory stood before her quite motionless—as for *his* breathing, it had quite ceased long since, but his eyes devoured her, feasted upon every gorgeous line and tint, revelled there. I think that in that moment all his promises and plans, all he had come to the garden to perform, all the plot and deception that had been woven about the girl before him, went in a flash from his mind, and he thought, if his brain acted at all, only of the wonderful beauty and loveliness of her, only that she was cruelly beset by Fate, helpless in a net that she might not see; and that he must free her somehow, if it cost his life to do so.

They stood so, motionless, not speaking for a long time, till at last young Mallory forced his eyes from her face and held out his hands.

"Eleanor!" said he in that deep, tender voice of his. "Eleanor!" No one could resist Mallory when he spoke like that. No one could be afraid or distrustful or cold. Alas! it's a wise provision of Providence that we haven't all such voices.

The girl raised her head with a little, low, nervous laugh, and put her hands quickly into his.

"Ah! you've—you've come at last!" she cried softly. "It's—really—you?"

She had given him but the swiftest glance when he came down the gravel path towards her; but now her great eyes searched him, wide with a certain breathless eagerness—with a certain half-frightened timidity, wondering a little. She searched him through and through.

Young Mallory drew the two slim hands together in his and stroked them gently. There was a little, steady smile upon his lips. No one could resist Mallory when he smiled like that. No one could be afraid or distrustful or cold. The girl's lips curved to the faintest answering smile, but her eyes never left his.

"Well?" said young Mallory presently, "will I do, Eleanor?"

The girl gave another little nervous laugh and drew her hands away.

"I—I'm afraid you'll have to do, won't you?" said she. "It isn't quite a matter of choice, is it?"

"Yes," said young Mallory very gently. "Yes, it is a matter of choice, Eleanor. I'm not quite a brute, you know." He had an indistinct notion that this was not playing the game at all as he was supposed to play it. What if she should take him at his word and send him away? But he put the notion aside quite calmly. It seemed not to weigh with him at all.

"Why, as for—as for that," said the girl, looking down again, "I'm not disappointed, you know, not a bit. Ah! I'm glad you're so big!" she cried, and smiled up at him. "I—was afraid you might be little and—fat. I hate fat people! Why, I have to look up to you, haven't I? And I'm very tall—as tall as a great many of the men I've known. You're not a bit what I fancied and—made

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mental pictures of. Ah! isn't it wonderful, Karl?"

"Karl? Karl?" said young Mallory to himself in a puzzled tone. "What does she mean by——oh, of course! Karl, of course! Keep your wits about you, you ass!"

"I wonder if Fate ever played such a strange trick upon a girl before? I wonder why Fate chose me?" She moved slowly over to one of the moss-stained marble benches that stood near the fountain and sank down upon it. Young Mallory sat near her.

"It was a cruel trick," she went on, "ingeniously cruel! Fancy a girl married to a man whom she doesn't remember ever to have seen or heard of! It would be funny, wouldn't it, if it weren't terrible?"

"Terrible?" smiled Denis Mallory.

The girl threw out her hand with a deprecating little laugh.

"Ah! you know what I mean, don't you?" she cried. "It isn't you that's terrible, it's the whole affair, the strangeness of it, the pitifulness of it—I know I'm your wife, Karl, but don't you see that I can't feel like it? Don't you see that you're an utter stranger to me, that whatever I may have known of you, cared for you, there at home, it's simply wiped away, made as if it never had been? You'll have to be very good to me, Karl, very patient and gentle and—forbearing. You will have to let me like you—care for you, all over again."

"If that is possible," said young Denis Mallory very low.

"Why, yes—yes, of course," said she slowly, "if that is possible. I think—I think it's more than—possible," said the Princess Eleanor, turning her beautiful head away from him. Then in a moment she looked up, laughing.

"Why, I believe you were trying to trap me into saying something pretty to you!" she cried. "You were fishing! The idea of your trying to flirt with me!" She regarded him meditatively with her head on one side.

"I don't know that I mind being flirted with," said the Princess Eleanor. "Men used to flirt with me—lots."

"Beasts!" growled young Mallory, and the Princess laughed.

"Tiens! jealous?" she cried. "Oh, mon Prince!" and she beat her small hands together delightedly.

"I'm jealous of every man who ever saw you," said young Mallory, and indulged in a wholly honest and quite portentous scowl.

"You needn't be," said the girl. She leaned towards him a little on the old stone bench and put up her two hands upon his shoulders. The great blue eyes searched him—as before, through and through.

"Never mind the other men, Karl," said she. "There's no other man that counts. Upon my faith! there isn't. I'm married to you, and I shall be true to you—always. Only—give me time, time to know you better, to care for you as I ought before I come to Novodnia with you. You may see me, like this, every day—you will, won't you? Flirt with me, Karl, make love to me, make me care for you. I—I think I've never known any man who could make me care so much as you could. Ah! if I only could tell you how glad I am that you're—what you are, big and strong and—tender—the sort of man a girl loves! I've been hideously worried and ill and all that because you didn't come to me sooner. I—I thought they were keeping you from me. Oh! I'd all sorts of dreadful suspicions. But you're here now, and I'm to see you every day, am I not? You shall see how soon I'll be well and strong once more. Please don't look so solemn and sad over it. Smile at me again, Karl; you've the kindest, dearest smile I ever saw. It makes one so comfortable! It makes one see how tender and true you are, and how utterly one may trust you."

Mallory shrank away from the two clinging hands and the great blue eyes. His face was crimson.

"Ah! you make me feel a brute, Eleanor!" he cried miserably. "A blackguard!"

But the girl laughed.

"You a brute?" said she; "you a blackguard, Karl? Don't be silly. Why, of course I know that a man isn't—isn't quite like a girl, you know. He has a rougher life to live. He has to see things and to know about things that a girl never hears of. But—a blackguard? You haven't a blackguard's smile, my Prince, nor a blackguard's eyes. No, I think I can trust you. The only witness against the prisoner is prejudiced by a most uncommon modesty. Not guilty, sir. That's the verdict. The jury didn't have even to leave its box."

She leaned back against the black, smooth trunk of a chestnut that stood behind the stone bench, and rested her head there, face upward to the warm sunshine that came flooding through the new leaves and interlaced branches above, and bathed her in a golden glory splashed with shadows. Mallory turned his eyes away.

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"Haven't you anything to say to me at all?" complained the Princess after a time.

"Eh! what?—oh! yes, yes!" said Mallory, pulling himself together with a jerk. He ventured another glance at the upturned face in its flood of mellow sunlight, and looked quickly away again.

"I've so much to say," he declared, "that I don't know where to begin and what to tell you first. I want to tell you a great deal about you—what you look like, and all that, you know; but I mustn't. You said I must begin gently; I'll tell you that to-morrow—or next week maybe."

"You—you might forget by that time," ventured the Princess wistfully. "Couldn't you—begin it—now—very, *very* gently, you know? Not that it matters, of course," she protested, with some haste. "I dare say I look very much like other women—don't I?"

"No, you don't," said young Mallory; "you know quite well that you don't. You're the—you're the most gor—no, I'm hanged if I'll tell—not to-day; besides, I couldn't if I should try."

"Oh, very well," said the Princess loftily; "if you want to be disagreeable about it, you may. Tell me why you didn't come to me sooner. I thought—oh! I thought all sorts of mad things. They kept putting me off from day to day, Dr. Mac—Sir Gavin MacKenzie and the others. I couldn't fancy what was the matter."

Mallory took a long breath of relief. This was safer.

"Why, you see," said he, "the country has been in a shocking state lately, and I couldn't leave it. My accession brought up a row of old standing, and I'd a hard time keeping the throne under me. It's all the fault of those beasts of Pavelovitches. They're, in a way, pretenders to the throne, you know, and they're Pan-Slavists, which means that they're ready to lick the Czar's boots if he crooks his finger. What we want in Novodnia is independence—no Russian patronage nor Austrian either. We've always been and always must be independent like Roumania, or like Bulgaria was before they slaughtered old Stambolof. That's the policy of our house, and that's what I've been struggling to maintain. It's no easy matter.

"Now, that," he continued inwardly, "that is what I call a very excellent and patriotic little speech—for a chap who's never been nearer Novodnia than Belgrade."

But the Princess seemed not greatly impressed or even interested.

"Oh, yes," she admitted; "all that sounds very political and desperate and shivery; but still, I don't see why you couldn't have left your friends to do that for you. Now, if *I'd* recently married a girl and she was terribly ill—in danger of her life, indeed—I think I'd manage to leave politics for a while and go to her. Of course, I don't know what Pan-Slavists are, and why Bulgaria and Roumania aren't just alike; but it seems to me they might have been civil enough to wait till you could come back."

"Oh, Lord!" groaned Mallory in despair. "Commend me to a woman for an appreciation of practical affairs! Politics, Eleanor? Politics! Do you think this thing is a New York municipal election? Do you know what would happen if I were to lose down there? It would be war, war! There'd be a small detachment of Russian troops quietly hustled over the border; that Pavelovitch swine would be set in my seat, and I'd be—buried with my fathers. You'd make an interesting widow, Eleanor."

But the Princess gave a little cry of alarm, and her eyes were very wide and round.

"Oh! is it so serious as that?" she demanded. "Ah! forgive me, Karl. I—I didn't know—I didn't realise what it meant. War?—and you killed? Ah! be careful, Karl; don't run risks unless you have to. You've someone else to think of now, you know."

"Yes, God bless her!" said young Mallory. "And I'm thinking of her always, Eleanor. But I've my country to think of first, you know. I must do what I was brought into the world to do, cost what it may. Did you think I stopped down there away from you because I wanted to? Novodnia comes first, because I'm first a ruler—a man afterwards.

"'Yet this inconstancy is such,'" he quoted, laughing a little, "'as thou, too, shalt adore. I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not—loved I——'" And he paused, stammering, and turned his face away with a sudden fierce passion of hatred for all this contemptible deception storming within him.

"'Loved I not honour more,'" said the Princess Eleanor softly. "Ah! that's like you, Karl! 'Loved I not honour more.' Honour's first, isn't it? I'd not hold you back when honour called you. I'd not even wish you back, for I know that your honour is the dearest thing in the world to you—you're that sort of a man, thank God! You'd never fail in a duty, nor take an unfair advantage, nor play a man or a woman a low trick. See how much I've learned of you in an hour, my Prince!"

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"'The Prince is on his way to Paris!'"

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But young Mallory sprang to his feet, teeth and hands clenched.

"By my faith, Eleanor!" he cried in an agony, "I won't let you think such things of me! I won't have you so impos——"

"Karl!" said the Princess Eleanor, and young Mallory bit his words in two. She rose to her feet and came around to face him, putting a hand upon his breast.

Her great eyes met his, clouded a little, anxious and pained, full for an instant of a trembling doubt; but she shook her head, smiling confidently into his face, and dropped the hand by her side.

"Don't frighten me, Karl," she said. "I—I'm not quite strong enough yet, you know, and my nerves have a nasty way of giving out at times. It's like you to think poorly of yourself; but don't think too poorly, for that's as bad as the other extreme. Come and take a little walk, mon Prince; I'm cold, just the least bit, from sitting still. We'll walk around the gravel path under the walls."

Mallory shook his head as if he would free himself from some load that was there, and squared his shoulders.

"Forgive me, Eleanor," said he. "Did I startle you? I mustn't do that, must I? For you're not well yet, not by a good deal. That makes a great difference, doesn't it?" He spoke somehow as if he were arguing with himself. "Come, we'll walk. We shall have a carpet of lilac blossoms to walk over instead of gravel. See how fast they are falling!"

Indeed, as they walked, they walked in a rain of tiny lavender blossoms. A puff of breeze from over the wall's coping, the touch of an elbow to a slender branch, brought a fragrant shower.

"My hair is loaded with petals!" cried the Princess Eleanor. "It's like confetti on Mi-Carême. Brush them out, Karl." She bent her head to him with a sudden little gesture like a child having its hair done. Indeed, despite her height and regal bearing, she was full of little unexpected childish tricks, infinitely dear.

Mallory's fingers did their bidding but ill. They lingered in the soft, bronze waves, touched them caressingly, but trembled there, helpless. And he drew his hands away with a quick exclamation.

"Ah, Eleanor!" he cried, "I—I can't!"

The Princess moved past him quickly, her head still bent very low. When he came up behind her, her cheeks were flaming.

They passed under the one little window in the wall, at the base of the garden, the window in Mallory's studio. He glanced up at it instinctively. Eager faces gleamed through the parting of the curtains, arms waved, fingers beckoned.

"What the deuce is up?" wondered young Mallory.

Then aloud—

"MacKenzie said I was to keep you out but a little while to-day, Eleanor. I suppose you ought to be going in. It's growing a bit cooler. We mustn't forget that you're not strong, must we?"

"Ah, no!" said she. "We mustn't forget that—though I shall be strong as ever, soon. Yes, I suppose I must go in. Will you come to the door with me, Karl? Oh! hasn't it been a beautiful day? And isn't our garden perfect? You'll come to-morrow, won't you? I—I shall be waiting for you. Why, here's Jess! My Cousin Jessica, you know—of course you do know, though. You must have met her at Newport at our—our—oh, Karl, Karl! our wedding."

The dark-haired young girl, waiting under the grey Gothic porch, gave Mallory her hand and said: "Oh, yes, of course, they had met at Newport," but she looked into his eyes very gravely, questioningly, as if she would measure him.

"She knows," said Mallory to himself. "She's in it, too, then." The girl moved close to his side as the Princess passed up the steps.

"They're waiting for you in your rooms," she whispered. "Go there at once!"

Mallory went quickly down through the garden and stood again under the window. MacKenzie, Von Altdorf, and I were waiting above, and I reached out an arm to pull him up to the ledge. Then the four of us sat down about the room and stared into one another's faces. Three of us, I know, were very pale and a bit breathless. Young Mallory looked tired, worn, as if he had been through some great strain and had come into its consequent relaxation. He seemed not particularly to notice our excitement—or, indeed, our presence.

MacKenzie made a motion of his hand to Colonel von Altdorf, and that gentleman turned to young Mallory.

"Now God help us all, Mr. Mallory!" said he, "for Prince Karl has—Heaven knows how—eluded his officers and gentlemen, and is on his way to Paris. Do you hear, man? *The Prince is on his way to Paris!*"

(*To be continued.*)

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QUAINT SURVIVALS OF ANCIENT CUSTOMS.

By Ernest Protheroe.

At what particular point the practice of any function may be said to become a "custom" is, perhaps, a matter there is little need to discuss, for beliefs and habits and customs appear to run together so inextricably that it would serve no useful purpose to attempt to draw fine distinctions between them. Rather will we confine ourselves to a description of curious customs still extant, drawing attention in passing to any peculiar aspects they may present either in their origin or practice.

In olden times the Church was usually the centre of the social life of the district, and hence many customs are more than remotely connected with the chief festivals of the Church calendar.

The chief seasons of the Christian year are marked by more or less singular observances that are common not only all the country over, but in many cases are familiar to other countries also. The practice of presenting gifts and singing carols at Christmas, the hot-cross buns of Good Friday, Easter eggs, and harvest homes readily occur to one as examples of this class; these have chiefly a religious significance. Others are of pagan origin, as May Day festivals and the sending of valentines; while some, as fireworks on November 5th, and the wearing of oak leaves on May 29th, perpetuate the memory of national historical events. Many practices are a strange admixture of Christian rite and pagan superstition, with purely local additions that make them somewhat difficult to classify.

Photo by] [*H. Whitehouse, Workington.*

ANNUAL FOOTBALL MATCH AT WORKINGTON: SAILORS *v.* COLLIERS.

This is the kick-off in midstream. The match lasts all day, the field of play being the whole town.

Then there are innumerable customs that are limited to particular localities, or peculiar to certain institutions or communities. The origin of these is ofttimes wrapped in obscurity, while others may be traced to the idiosyncrasy of eccentric persons who not infrequently have left behind them sufficient funds to perpetuate their strange desires.

Our old-world rural life was marked by a constant succession of feasts, pastimes, and observances that were ever dear to the hearts of village communities. Town life, with its business considerations and its modern amusements, dissipates the desire for simple revels. The penny post, the omnipresent news-sheet, the shriek of the railway whistle, compulsory education, and the hundred-and-one benefits, or otherwise, of modern progress have sounded the death-knell of numerous ancient customs which have quietly expired without a last gasp, as it were, to mark their passing.

Many an old-time function, formerly characterised by a rustic simplicity and enjoyment in harmless capers, has degenerated into an annual orgy, marked by all manner of excesses. Booths with exhibitions in doubtful taste and of still less doubtful utility have replaced the old mummer plays; cheap holiday excursions bring crowds of roysterers; and gorgeous whirligigs on their eternal round add steam-tortured music to the general pandemonium.

But there still remain to this day an astonishing number of quaint ceremonies that are worthy of more than passing

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notice, of which the following are fairly typical.

Football at Workington.

In various parts of the country, Shrove Tuesday is the day set apart for a rough-and-tumble football match—or, rather, a match that would seem to be an amalgamation of football, cross-country run, and Donnybrook Fair. A famous match of this kind takes place every year at Workington, in Cumberland, when the greater part of a whole day is devoted to a game marked by an almost primeval disregard of life and limb. It usually resolves itself into a stern contest between the colliers and the sailors of the town. The former are known as the "Uppies"; the latter are styled the "Downies." The aim of the colliers is directed to successfully carrying the ball over the gates of Curwen's Hall, at the high end of the town; the sailors' breezy efforts intimate a wild desire to "hale" the ball at the capstan on the harbour.

So popular is this annual event that excursion trains run to Workington from all parts of the county, and as many as 50,000 persons witness the struggle for supremacy. The game commences on the "Cloffocks," a level piece of ground with a thick covering of mud deposited by the high tide. Here some four or five hundred men, stripped to the waist, may be seen floundering and spluttering in the slimy mixture.

Some of the unrehearsed involuntary antics of the players may not be particularly pleasing to themselves, but as a spectacular attraction leave nothing to be desired. During the whole game the onlookers see little of the ball, for it is usually the very focus of a dense mass of struggling, sweltering humanity. When the play occasionally veers into the adjacent side streets, the excitement is redoubled; fences are torn down; walls are scaled; and the game waxes fast and furious in the back-yards of unoffending and peaceable citizens. At times the shades of night are closing in before the goal is reached and the contestants retire to remove the traces of the fray, which in many cases is only attained after many days, with a liberal treatment of arnica and sticking-plaster.

James I. expressed his disapproval of football in a royal proclamation, describing it as "meeter for lameing than making able the users thereof." Possibly he had witnessed such a game as the Workington contest, in which case his strictures on all rough and violent exercises as the "footballe" were by no means too severe.

Photo by] [*S. Hawkes, Hungerford.*

KISSING DAY AT HUNGERFORD.

Last year's officials, with wands of office and ancient horn.

In accordance with charter granted by John o' Gaunt, selected officials collect pennies from men and kisses from women.

Kissing Day at Hungerford.

Hockney Tuesday—the first Tuesday after Easter week—is the occasion of an osculatory festival at Hungerford, in Berkshire. Let

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us not, however, treat the subject in any spirit of levity, for Kissing Day in the little borough is all in strict accordance with the charter which John o' Gaunt granted the inhabitants hundreds of years ago.

After blasts upon an ancient horn, the gift of Gaunt in 1362, the Hocktide jury assembles to listen to the recital of the charter. In solemn conclave it discusses such weighty matters of State as the condition of the drains and the poundage fines for strayed animals, what time two tuttemen, carrying wands of office, pass from house to house collecting their dues. For purely imaginary services rendered to the town they are empowered to collect a kiss from every female and a penny from every male.

Photo by] [*Alfred Gray, Whitby.*

"PENNY HEDGE," MAY 15.

There is usually no such indecorous competition for the office of tutteman as the ignorant in such matters may lightly suppose. The pennies are, as a rule, forthcoming; but in these days of women's rights, to say nothing of men's unreasonableness concerning the kisses of their womenkind, the kisses are honoured quite as often in the breach as the observance.

Photo by] [*A. Gray, Whitby*

PLANTING THE "PENNY HEDGE" AT WHITBY, IN FULFILMENT OF THE CURSE OF A HERMIT.

The pennies are spent in the purchase of oranges for distribution among crowds of interested children. In due course the jurymen, the constable, the portreeve, the ale-tasters, and the tuttemen, together with other worthies reminiscent of old time, adjourn to a quaint old hostelry for luncheon; and if all do not go home in a happy frame of mind, it is no fault of the John o' Gaunt punch, which is concocted from a rhyming recipe written upon a tattered old parchment.

Our illustration shows the tuttemen of last year. Probably some of my readers think that they themselves would make ideal candidates for the position, and that

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Photo by] [*R. Bull, Ashbourne.*

WELL-DRESSING AT TISSINGTON. PROCESSION AND SERVICE AT THE CHIEF WELL, ASCENSION DAY.

they could fill the bill to perfection with credit to themselves and satisfaction to the ladies of Hungerford.

Whitby Penny Hedge.

In the fifth year of the reign of King Henry II., some gentlemen were hunting the wild boar in Eskdaleside Forest. Chase was given to a huge animal which for a long time defied the staves and hounds of his pursuers. The boar was at last sore stricken and sought refuge in a chapel or hermitage where lived a monk of Whitby. The hermit barred the door and kept the hounds at bay while he engaged in meditation and prayer. The huntsmen were exceedingly wroth with the hermit for spoiling their sport, and in their anger fell upon him with their staves and slew him. The holy man with his last breath forgave his slayers, but for the safeguarding of their souls, and in remembrance of his death at their hands, imposed a penalty upon them. Every year on the eve of Ascension Day was the horngarth or penny hedge to be planted at the brim of the water; he also stipulated that a horn should be blown, followed by the stern denunciation: "Out on ye! out on ye!"

Photo by] [*R. Bull, Ashbourne.*

A DRESSED WELL AT TISSINGTON, ASCENSION DAY.

Whether the story is authentic or not, it is almost impossible to decide, but the performance of the penance by the successors to certain property in Whitby at least gives it the appearance of reality. The harbour-master usually plants the hedge, and the bailiff of the manor and the steward of the estate attend to see the devoir duly carried out. The ceremony is now in its ninth

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Photo by] *[Taunt, Oxford.*

CHOIR SINGING ON TOP OF MAGDALEN TOWER, OXFORD, MAY DAY.

century, and the horn on which the blasts are blown is reputed to be at least 500 years old.

Sir Walter Scott, with even more licence than is generally granted to poets, versified the story, making St. Hilda's nuns relate the evil deeds of Norman barons several centuries after their monastery was destroyed by the Danes.

Well-Dressing.

In the early years of the seventeenth century, the country was suffering from the

Photo by] *[Taunt, Oxford.*

CROWD WATCHING MAY DAY SERVICE, OXFORD, 5 A.M.

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effects of drought the like of which eclipsed all previous scarcities of water. Some portions of Derbyshire suffered severely—the brooks, rivers, and wells were dried up, and the outlook was indeed a doleful one. Strange to say, the water in the wells of the village of Tissington showed no diminution, their life-giving streams never failed, and hither the farmers brought thousands of sheep and cattle from all the surrounding countryside for the water which they needed.

Out of gratitude for benefits received, it was decided to institute a Well-Dressing Festival at Tissington, on Ascension Day, and the custom has been kept up to the present day. The wells are gaily decorated with flowers, flags, lanterns, texts, and mottoes. In the one here shown, the effect is exceedingly happy, and even without examining details one can judge of the time and labour expended.

After an early service in the church, the clergy, choir, and congregation form a procession and repair to the side of the chief well to engage in a thanksgiving service.

Apart from the sentimental interest, there is a utilitarian side to this annual *fête* that is not without value. The well-dressing ceremonies create an interest on the part of the villagers in the repair and general conditions of the wells and their precincts which, in turn, reflects itself in the general purity of the water which issues from them.

Photo by] [*Piggott, Leighton Buzzard.*

WILKES CHARITY, LEIGHTON BUZZARD.

Reading ancient will preparatory to beating the bounds. A boy stands on his head during the reading, as provided in the terms of the will.

May Day at Oxford.

To worship the sun from a great height was a very ancient custom, and the celebration of May Day on the top of Magdalen Tower, at Oxford, may perchance be a Christianised form of the same idea. But while the origin of the service may be doubtful, the air of romance that surrounds the quaint survival is beyond all question.

The college dons and choir compass the first stage of their climb with comparative ease by means of flights of wooden steps, the steepness of which, however, is sufficient trial to those whose years are many or whose girth is abnormal. The second stage is marked by a circular stone turret the dimensions of which only admit one person at a time. The top being reached, the climber is amply rewarded by the panorama that meets his eyes. What a medley of towers, spires, minarets, domes, and pinnacles, backed by the eastern horizon all aglow with colour!

At five o'clock the choir chants a Latin hymn which was written by a Fellow of Magdalen, and set to music by the college organist, as far back as 1685. The hymn still forms part of the college grace. One of the finest choirs in England singing under such conditions is remarkably effective and makes a lasting impression upon those who hear it.

At the conclusion of the hymn, the bells below break out in a joyous welcome to the "merrie month," which is the signal for the effervescing undergrad to enliven the pro-

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THE CHRISTMAS "WASSAIL" BOWL CARRIED ROUND A COTSWOLD VILLAGE.

"Wassail! Wassail! our jolly Wassail!
And joy shall go with our jolly Wassail!"

A quaint old custom now surviving only among the shepherds and farm-labourers of the Cotswolds, and in parts of Yorkshire, is the Yuletide decorating of a wooden "wassail-bowl"—in some cases a vessel many generations old. The bowl is carried round the village "with musical honours," and the auditors are expected to pay tribute in coin, which is dropped into the brimming vessel. The contents of the bowl are eventually consumed by the revellers, and the money divided among them.

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Photo by] [*Stacey, Dunmow.*

COMPETING FOR THE DUNMOW FLITCH.

ceedings in his own inimitable manner. Caps and gowns are snatched off and thrown down below, where they fall among the crowd which has stared from a distance at the fanciful ceremonial.

After the ceremony there is breakfast in the college hall, for which the climb and keen morning air have provided appetites more than usually obtrusive.

The Wilkes Charity, Leighton Buzzard.

The Wilkes Charity at Leighton Buzzard dates from 1630. It was founded by Edward Wilkes, a merchant of London, and further endowed by his son Matthew some sixty years later.

The annual income of the charity, which is derived from lands, is expended in apprenticing four boys and four girls at intervals of several years, and in maintaining almshouses for ten poor widows, each of whom receives six shillings per week, together with fuel and clothing. Matthew further left funds to keep green the memory of his father for all time. On Rogation Monday in each year the trustees of the charity meet in the Church square. Accompanied by the town crier carrying a bunch of flowers tied on the top of a pole, and the boys of a neighbouring school, they walk to the various properties belonging to the charity.

In front of the almshouses the ceremony is concluded by the reading of the original will. Even if its provisions are not set out at abnormal length, it is sufficiently verbose for the boy who is required to stand on his head while the quaint phraseology of the will is duly expounded. The boy who held the post of honour at last year's ceremony could not maintain his inverted equilibrium without the good offices of the town crier, whose firm grasp corrected a marked tendency to wobble.

When the charity lands were unenclosed, the processionists, armed with green boughs, proceeded to beat the bounds, and on the boundary line of each property a boy was "bumped" against a tree. Until twenty-five years ago half a pint of beer and a plain roll were given to each boy in the procession—whether as a peace-offering to the wounded feelings and bruised bodies of those who had been "bumped" does not appear upon record. Nowadays no beer is supplied, although provided for in the will "so long as the sun shines and the water flows." The testator, however, had not foreseen depreciation in land, which now leaves but small margin for luxuries; but advocates of temperance principles may agree that a fall in rents may thus become a saving grace.

The Dunmow Flitch.

The Dunmow Flitch of Bacon is said to have been instituted in the time of Henry III. The flitch is a matrimonial prize for which happy couples, who have never quarrelled during the first year of their married life,

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strive to establish their claims before an impartial jury composed of six maidens and an equal number of bachelors. There is a judge arrayed in full-bottomed wig, and advocates plead for and against the claims of the suitors. The examination and cross-examination of the claimants occasion much mirth: and when the couples are pronounced worthy of the flitch, they are chaired and carried round the meadow, finally halting at an open-air stage, where they publicly take the oath, kneeling on rough stones.

The customary oath is to the following effect—

You do swear by custom of confession
That you never made nuptial transgression,
Nor since you were married man and wife,
By household brawls or contentious strife,
Or otherwise at bed or board
Offended each other in deed or word.
Or in a twelvemonth's time and a day
Repented not in thought anyway,
Or since the church clerk said "Amen,"
Wished yourselves unmarried again,
But continue true and in desire
As when you joined hands in holy quire.

As soon as the bacon has been claimed, the court proceeds to pronounce sentence—

Since to these conditions without any fear
Of your own accord you do freely swear,
A whole gammon of bacon you do receive,
And bear it away with love and good leave;
For this is the custom of Dunmow well known;
Though the pleasure be ours, the bacon's your own.

Photo by] *[Jones, Rochford.*

THE WHISPERING-POST, ROCHFORD, SUSSEX.

It has been cynically stated that the flitches have never been fairly won except at the very first competition, when two couples successfully formulated their claims. The first couple was a sea-captain and his wife, who had not seen each other after the wedding until the day the prize was awarded; the second was an honest pair who resided in the near neighbourhood, the husband being a man of plain, common sense and an equable temper—*the woman was dumb.* Dr. Brewer maintained that the revival of this "premium for humbug" was a mere get-up for the benefit of the town. This is largely borne out by the programme of the proceedings for the day, which includes pony races, variety shows, and a host of other holiday attractions for the thousands of visitors who crowd into the little town on the day of the annual observance.

Land Tenure.

There still remain a few curious customs in connection with land tenure, but they frequently lapse for years, until some interested person of antiquarian tastes causes them to be revived.

At Chingford, in Essex, an estate is held by a very curious condition. Whenever it passes into new hands, the owner, with his wife, man-servant, and maid-servant, comes on horseback to the parsonage and pays his homage by blowing three blasts upon a horn; he carries a hawk upon his fist; his servant has a greyhound in a slip, both for the use of the rector for that day. He receives a chicken for the hawk, a peck of oats for his horse, and a loaf of bread for his greyhound. After dinner the owner blows three more blasts, and then with his party withdraws from the rectory.

The Castor Whip Tenure is, perhaps, more remarkable. On Palm Sunday a servant from the Broughton Estate attends service at Castor Church with a new cart-whip, and after cracking it three times in the porch, marches with it to the manorial seat. When the clergyman begins the sermon, he quits the seat with his whip. A purse containing thirty pieces of silver is fixed at the end of the leash, and, kneeling on a cushion, he holds the purse suspended over the head of the clergyman until the end of the sermon.

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At the conclusion of the service the purse and whip are left at the manor-house.

At Rochford, Essex, there is a very quaint practice. The Whisper Court is a strange Michaelmas observance held under the superintendence of the steward of the manor. The business of the court is carried out at midnight in the open air; the absence of a tenant is punishable by a fine of double his rent for each hour he fails to be in attendance; no artificial light except a firebrand is permitted; the proceedings are recorded by means of one of the embers of the brand; the roll of fourteen tenants is then called over and answered to in a whisper, and then they kneel down and swear allegiance.

Very many years ago, the lord of the manor, after an absence from his estate, was returning home by night. Passing over King's Hill, he accidentally heard some of his discontented tenantry plotting his assassination, and, thus warned, he reached home by an unexpected route. From that time forth he enacted that the tenants on his estate should assemble every year exactly at the same time to do him homage around a post which he erected on the precise spot where the plotters met. The present post was erected in 1867, and is an exact counterpart of the original post. It will be seen that it is spiked at the top to represent a huge candle.

Scouring the White Horse.

White Horse Hill, on the Berkshire Downs, is remarkable for this most noted of sundry figures in outline long preserved on various of our chalk downs. On the top of the hill is a Roman camp, with gates and ditch and mounds, all as perfect as it was a score of years after the legionaries had left it. It had been a British camp long before the Romans grasped its possibilities, and in later times became a great camp of the Danes.

Rudely excavated in the chalk of which the hill is composed is a figure representing, when viewed from the vale beneath, a sufficiently recognisable delineation of a white horse in the act of galloping. Its length is about 374 feet, and the space which it occupies is said to be nearly two acres.

Photo by] [*Reveley, Wantage.*

WHITE HORSE HILL.

No exact evidence can be adduced regarding the origin of this remarkable figure, but there seems to be little doubt that in accordance with the popular tradition, it was carved to commemorate the victory of King Ethelred and his brother Alfred, afterwards Alfred the Great, over the Danes, at Ashdown, in the year 871. The actual site of the battle has been the subject of much discussion; but the balance of probability is in favour of it having been fought in the neighbourhood of White Horse Hill.

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ONE WAY OF KEEPING UP AN OLD CUSTOM: A NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY ASSEMBLED TO SEE THE OLD YEAR OUT AND WELCOME IN THE NEW.

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Were the preservation of this curious relic dependent only on the persistency of the original figure, it would probably have long since been obliterated by the washing down of *débris* from above into the trench, and the gradual formation of turf. A custom, however, has existed among the local inhabitants of assembling periodically, and scouring or cleaning out the trench so as to renew and preserve the figure of the horse. This ceremony is known as "Scouring the White Horse," and, according to ancient usage, the scourers are entertained at the expense of the lord of the manor. The festival which concludes their labours forms a *fête* of one or two days' duration.

The scouring does not appear to occur at any fixed period. At the present time the horse is very distinct, having been renovated only a few years ago on the coming of age of young Lord Craven, the owner of the land.

Photo by] [*Chaplin, Stratford-on-Avon.*

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON MOP.

Stratford-upon-Avon Mop.

In Lincolnshire and other counties, statute fairs are held for the purpose of hiring servants; in Yorkshire and Derbyshire they used to be very common, and were accompanied by much dissipation. The servants used to stand in rows, the males together and the females together, and masters and mistresses walked down the lines and selected those whom they considered suitable. The custom seemed to savour of slave-dealing.

Stratford-upon-Avon Mop, or ancient statute fair, takes place annually in October, and is one of the few that, as time goes on, appears to increase in popularity; it is now certainly the largest in England. A marked feature of the Mop is the roasting of whole oxen and pigs in the open streets; on each occasion as many as half-a-dozen oxen and twice as many porkers are spitted. In our illustration are shown the huge revolving spits that are necessary to carry out the cooking arrangements.

The hiring of servants has almost disappeared, cheap newspaper advertisements rendering the practice unnecessary, and the custom has degenerated into a noisy carnival where the streets of the Shakespearean Mecca are choked with seething masses of humanity gathered from the whole countryside, swelled by thousands of trippers from Birmingham and the Black Country, and even as far as Manchester and London.

A week later is held the Runaway Mop, originally sanctioned for the convenience of those farm-hands and domestics who, not liking their new situations, had taken "French leave" and were desirous of being hired again.

That old customs die hard is surely a matter for congratulation, for it is good for us to still retain in the midst of the stress and toil of our every-day life any links of sentimental and historic interest that take us back into the almost forgotten past. Many of these little incidents, more or less trivial in themselves, have become ingrained features of our national life, and of them it may be truly said—

> Age cannot wither, nor custom stale
> Their infinite variety.

A number of other interesting survivals of old customs will be described and illustrated in a second article.

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A CHILD'S THOUGHTS.

By FLORENCE WILKINSON.

A BOTANICAL ADVENTURE.

I FOUND a flower named Bouncing Bet
This morning in the roadside grass;
I got my skirts all sopping wet;
I took it to the Botany class,
And Teacher showed me very plain
The little pistol that it had,
Beneath the Maggie flying-glass.

And then we wrote down in our books:
"The poplar name is Bouncing Bet
And it is found in wayside nooks,
Escaped from gardens where it grew;
But sometimes cultivated yet."
Dear Bouncing Bet! how spirited
And fine that was of you!

To run away and to escape
From stiff old gardens long ago
And paths made prim by hoe and tape.
A brave adventure to have planned!
Oh, I can see you, stooping low,
Creep slily underneath the gate,
Your little pistol in your hand.

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THE GREY FEET.

I OFTEN hear footsteps a-following behind;
But Katie laughs, "La, child! you hear them in your mind."

I call them my Grey Feet because they seem to stray
Along the edge of evening, when kittens love to play.

They rustle in the woods, they creakle on the stair;
I turn around to speak, but no one's ever there.

I think they are the Shadows of all the different things,
The Shadows of tall trees, of ships and clouds and kings.

Tiptoeing off somewhere, whispering, "Hush!" and "Hark!"
For shadows never must be seen after the streets get dark.

I call them my Grey Feet, they go so soft and blind;
But Katie laughs, "La, child! you hear them in your mind."

MEMORY.

THERE are just two kinds of remember:
You either remember clear as glass,
The way John does in arithmetic class,
Or else you sort-of-remember,
The way I do from my history book,
The way that dim reflections look
In the shiny black piano legs,
Or the shaky water of the brook;
That's how I sort-of-remember.

Now, mother says I can't remember
The time before I did get born,
Seven years ago on Sunday morn:
And yet I sort-of-remember
My little body riding far
From the place where wings and circles are,
With voices flying up as dust:
Till mother twinkled like a star;
That's how I sort-of-remember.

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THE CAREER OF JOAN CARTHEW:

THE ADVENTURES OF A GIRL WHO HAD NOTHING AND WANTED EVERYTHING.

By Mrs. C. N. WILLIAMSON.*

No. I.—THE OLD LADY IN THE VICTORIA.

JOAN CARTHEW had reason to believe that it was her birthday, and she had signalised the occasion by running away from home. But her birthday, and her home, and her running away, were all so different from things with the same name in the lives of other children, that the celebration was not in reality as festive as it might seem in print.

In the first place, she based her theory as to the date solely upon a dim recollection that once, eons of years ago, when she had been a petted little creature with belongings of her own (she was now twelve), there had been presents and sweets on the 13th of May. She thought she could recall looking eagerly forward to that anniversary; and she argued shrewdly that, as her assortment of agreeable memories was small, in all likelihood she had not made a mistake.

In the second place, Joan's home was a Brighton lodging-house, where she was a guest of the landlady, and not a "paying" guest, as she was frequently reminded. In that vague time, eons ago, she had been left at the house by her mother (who was, it seemed, an actress), with a sum of money large enough to pay for her keep until that lady's return from touring, at the end of the theatrical season. The end of the season and the end of the money had come about the same time, but not the expected mother. The beautiful Mrs. Carthew, whose professional name was Marie Lanchester, had never reappeared, never written. Mrs. Boyle had made inquiries, advertised, and spent many shillings on theatrical papers, but had been able to learn nothing. Mr. Carthew was a vague shadow in a mysterious background, less substantial even than a "walking gentleman," and Mrs. Boyle, feeling herself a much injured woman, had in her first passion of resentment boxed Joan's ears and threatened to send the "brat" to the poorhouse. But the child was in her seventh year and beginning to be useful. She liked running up and down stairs to answer the lodgers' bells, which saved steps for the two overworked servants; and, of course, when she became a burden instead of the means of lightening burdens, it was discovered that she could do many other things with equal ease and propriety. She could clean boots and knives, wash dishes, help make beds, and carry trays; she could also be slapped for occasionally dropping the latter, which afforded relief to the landlady's feelings. As years went on, further spheres of usefulness opened, especially after the Boyle baby came; one servant could be kept instead of two; and taking everything into consideration, Joan's hostess decided to continue her charity. Therefore, the child could have answered the conundrum, "When is a home not a home?" out of the stores of her own experience.

In the third place, she had only run away as far as one of the shelters on the Marine Parade; she had brought the landlady's baby with her, and, lurking grimly in the recesses of her mind, she had the virtuous intention of going home again when Minnie should get hungry enough to cry, at tea-time.

Joan was telling the two-year-old Minnie a fairy story, made up out of her own head, all about a gorgeous princess, and founded on the adventures she herself would best like to have, when, just as the narrative was working towards an exciting climax, a girl of Joan's own age came in sight, walking with her governess.

The story broke off short between Joan's little white teeth, which suddenly shut together with a click. This did not signify much, as far as the Boyle baby was concerned, for Joan unconsciously wove fairy tales more for her own pleasure than that of her companion, and as a matter of fact

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the warmth of the afternoon sunshine had acted as "juice of poppy and mandragora" upon Minnie's brain. Her small, primrose-yellow head was nodding, and she was unaware that the story had ended just as the princess was beguiling the dragon, and that a girl almost as fine as the princess herself was approaching.

The new-comer was about twelve or thirteen, and she was more exquisitely dressed than any child Joan remembered to have seen. Perhaps, if the apparition had been a good deal younger or older, the lodging-house drudge would not have observed so keenly, or realised with a quick stab of passionate pain the illimitable gulf dividing lives. But here was a girl of her own age, her own height, her own needs and capacities, and yet—the difference!

It struck her like a thrust of some thin, delicate surgical instrument which could inflict anguish, yet leave no trace. Joan's whole life was spent in dreaming; without the dreams, existence at 12, Seafoam Terrace would not have been tolerable to a young creature with the nerves of a racehorse and the imagination of a Scherherazade. She lived practically a double life within herself, but never until this moment had she been consciously jealous of the happier fate of a fellow-creature.

In looking from the shelter where she sat in shadow, at the other girl who walked in sunshine, she knew the crunching pain of the monster's fangs.

The other girl had long, fair hair; she wore white muslin, foaming with lace frills, white silk stockings, and shoes of white suède. Her face was shaded by a great, rose-crowned, leghorn hat, which flopped into soft curves and made a picture of small features which without it might have seemed insignificant. The magnetism which was in Joan Carthew's eyes forced the girl to turn and throw a glance as she passed at the shabby child in faded brown serge (a frock altered from a discarded one of Mrs. Boyle's) who sat huddled in the shelter, with a tawdrily dressed baby asleep by her side. The glance had all the primitive, merciless disdain of a sleekly fortunate young animal for a miserable, hunted one, and Joan felt the meaning of it in her soul.

"Why should she have everything and I nothing?" was the old-new question which

"She wound her slim, childish arms round Lady Thorndyke's waist."

formed itself wordlessly in the child's brain. "She looks at me as if I were a rat. I'm not a rat! I'm as good as she is, if I had her clothes. I'm cleverer, and prettier, too, I know I am—heaps and heaps. Oh! I want to be like her, only better—I must be—I shall!"

She quivered with the fierceness of her revolt against fate, yet in it was no vulgar jealousy. The other girl's pale blue eyes, in

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one contemptuous glance, had found every patch on her frock and shoes, had criticised her old hat, and sneered at her little, rough, work-worn hands, scorning her for them as if she were a creature of an inferior race; but Joan had no personal hatred for the happier child, no wish for revenge, no desire to take from the other what she had. The feeling which shook her with sudden, stormy passion was merely the sharp realisation of injustice, the conviction that by nature she herself was worthy of the good things she had missed, the savage resolve to have what she ought to have, at any cost.

It was not tea-time yet, and Minnie was happily asleep; Joan was certain to be scolded just as sharply on her return as if she had stopped away for hours longer, therefore she might as well have drained her birthday cup of stolen pleasure to the dregs; but the good taste of the draught was gone. She yearned only to go home, to get the scolding over, and to have a few minutes to herself in the tiny back room which she shared with the baby. There seemed to be much to think of, much to decide.

The child waked Minnie, who was cross at being roused and refused to walk. The quickest way of triumphing over the difficulty was to carry her, and this method Joan promptly adopted. But the baby was heavy and fractious. She wriggled in her young nurse's grasp, and just as Joan had staggered round the corner of Seafoam Terrace, with her disproportionate burden, she tripped and fell, under the windows of No. 12.

Minnie roared, and there was an echoing shriek from the house. Mrs. Boyle, who had been looking up and down the street in angry quest of her missing drudge, saw the catastrophe and rushed to the rescue of her offspring. She snatched the baby, who was more frightened than hurt, and holding her by one arm, proceeded to administer chastisement to Joan.

Instinctively she knew that the girl was sensitive and proud, though she had no kindred feelings in her own soul, and she delighted in humiliating her drudge before the whole street. As she screamed reproaches and harsh names, raining a shower of blows on Joan's ears and head and burning cheeks, a face appeared in at least one window of each house along the Terrace. Though a cataract of sparks cascaded before the child's eyes, somehow she saw the faces and imagined a dozen for every one.

This shame seemed to her beyond bearing. She forgot even her love for the baby, which (with the dreams) was the bright thread in the dull fabric of her existence. After this martyrdom, she neither could nor would live on in Seafoam Terrace, which with all its eyes had seen her beaten like a dog.

"Into the house with you, you lazy, good-for-nothing brat!" panted Mrs. Boyle, when her hand was tired of smiting; and with a push, she would have urged the girl towards the open front door, but Joan turned suddenly and faced her.

"No!" she cried, "I won't be your servant any more! I've done with you. I will never go into your hateful house again, until I come back as a grand lady you will have to bow down to and worship."

These were grandiloquent words, and Mrs. Boyle would either have laughed with a coarse sneer, or struck Joan again for her impudence, had not the look in the child's great eyes actually cowed her for the moment. In that moment the thin girl of twelve, whom she had beaten, seemed to grow very tall and wonderfully beautiful; and in the next, she had gone like a whirlwind which comes and passes before it has been realised.

Joan was desperate. Her newly formed ambition and her stinging shame mounted like frothing wine to her hot brain. She was in a mood to kill herself—or make her fortune.

For a time she flew on blindly, neither knowing nor caring which way she went. By and by, as breath and strength failed, she ran more slowly, then settled into a quick, unsteady walk. She was on the front, running in the direction of Hove, and in the distance a handsome victoria with two horses was coming. The sun shone on the silver harness and the horses' satin backs. There was a coachman and a groom in livery, and in the carriage sat an old lady dressed in grey silk, of the same soft tint as her hair.

Joan had seen this old lady in her victoria several times before, and had pretended to herself, in one of her glittering dreams, that the lady took a fancy to her and proposed adoption.

Now, in a flash of thought, which came quick as the glint of light on a bird's wing, the child told herself that this thing must happen. She had no home, no people, nothing; she would stake her life on the one throw which might win all or lose all.

Without stopping to be afraid, or to argue whether she were brave or foolhardy, she ran forward and threw herself in front of the horses. The coachman pulled them up so

sharply that the splendid pair plunged, almost falling back on to the victoria, but he was not quick enough to save the child one blow on the shoulder from an iron-shod hoof.

In an instant the groom was in the road and had snatched her up, with a few gruff words which Joan dimly heard and understood, although she had just enough consciousness left to feign unconsciousness.

"How dreadful! how dreadful!" the old lady was exclaiming. "You must put the poor little thing in the carriage, and I'll drive to the nearest doctor's."

"Better let me take her in a cab to a hospital, my lady," advised the groom. "It wasn't our fault. She ran under the horses' feet. Tomkins and me can both swear to that."

The arbitress of Joan's fate appeared to hesitate, and the child thought best to revive enough to open her eyes (which she knew to be large and soft as a fawn's) for one imploring glance. In the fall which had caused her to drop the Boyle baby, she had grazed her forehead against a lamp-post, and on the small, white face there remained a stain of blood which was effective at this juncture. She started, put out her hand, and groped for the old lady's dress, at which she caught as a drowning man is said to catch at a straw.

"On second thoughts, I will take her home, if she can tell me where she lives. She seems to be reviving," said the lady. "Where do you live, my poor little girl?"

"I—don't live anywhere," gasped Joan, white-lipped. "I haven't any mother or any home, or anything. I wanted to die."

"Oh, you poor little pitiful thing! What a sad story!" crooned the old lady. "You shall go to *my* home, and stop till you get well, and I will buy you a doll and lots of nice toys."

The rapidly recovering Joan determined that, once in the old lady's house, she would stop long after she had got well, and that she would, sooner or later, have many things better than toys. But she smiled gratefully, faintly, looking like a broken flower. The groom was directed to place her on the seat, in a reclining posture, and she was given the old lady's silk-covered air-cushion to rest her head upon. She really ached in every bone, but she was exaggerating her sufferings, saying to herself: "It's come! I've walked right into the fairy story, and nothing shall make me walk out again. I've got nobody to look after me, so I'll have to look after myself and be my own mamma. I can't help it, whether it's right or wrong. I don't know much about right and wrong, anyhow, so I shan't bother. I've got to grow up a grand, rich lady; my chance has come, and I'd be silly not to take it."

Having thus disposed of her conscience—such as her wretched life had made it—Joan proceeded to faint again, as picturesquely as possible. Her pretty little head, rippling over with thick, gold-brown hair, fell on the grey silk shoulder and gave the kindly, rather foolish old heart underneath a warm, protecting thrill. The child's features were lovely, and her lashes very long and dark. If she had been ugly, or even plain, in spite of her appealing ways, Lady Thorndyke (the widow of a rich City knight) would probably have agreed to the groom's suggestion; but Joan did not overestimate her own charms and their power. A quarter of a century ago Lady Thorndyke had lost a little girl about the age of this pathetic waif, and she had had no other child. There was a nephew on the Stock Exchange, but Lady Thorndyke was interested in him merely because she thought it her duty, though he had been brought up to take it for granted that he would be her heir. In truth, the lonely woman had half unconsciously sighed all her life for romance and for love. She had never had much of either, and now, in this tragic child who clung to her and would not be denied, there was promise of both.

So Joan was borne in great spiritual triumph and slight bodily pain to the big, old-fashioned Brighton house where her new protectress spent the largest part of the year. She was put into a bed which smelled of lavender and felt like a soft, warm cloud; she went through the ordeal of being examined by a doctor, knowing that her whole future might depend upon his verdict. She lay sick and quivering with a thumping heart, lest he should say: "This child is perfectly well, except for a bruise and a scratch or two. There is nothing to prevent her being sent home." But in her anxiety Joan had worked herself into a fever. The doctor was a fat, comfortable man, with children of his own, and the escaped drudge could have worshipped him when he announced that she was in a highly nervous state, and would be better for a few days' rest, good nursing, and nourishing food.

She had arnica and plasters externally, and internally beef-tea. Then she told her story. Had it been necessary, Joan would have plunged into a sea of fiction, but she had

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"'No, I will not marry you.'"

enough dramatic perception to see that nothing could be more effective than the truth, dashed in with plenty of colour.

Joan's memory was as vivid as her imagination. She was fired to eloquence by her own wrongs; and her word-sketch of the poor baby deserted by a beautiful, mysterious actress, her picturesque conjectures as to that actress's noble husband, the harrowing portrait of her angelic young self as a lodging-house drudge, the final climax, painting the savage punishment in the street, and her resolve to seek refuge in death (the one fabrication in the tale), affected the secretly sentimental heart of the City knight's widow like music.

"I would rather have been trampled to death under your horse's feet than go back!" sobbed the child.

"Don't be frightened and excite yourself, my poor, pretty little dear," Lady Thorndyke soothed her. "No harm shall come to you, I promise that."

Joan's instinctive tact had been sharpened to diplomacy by the constant need of self-defence. She said no more; she only looked; and her eyes were like those of a wounded deer which begs its life of the hunter.

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Lady Thorndyke began to turn over various schemes for Joan's advantage; but that same evening, which was Saturday, her nephew, George Gallon, arrived from town to spend Sunday with his aunt. She told him somewhat timidly about the lovely child she was sheltering, and the hard-mouthed, square-chinned young man threw cold water on her projects. He said that the girl was no doubt a designing little brute, who richly deserved what she had got from the charitable if quick-tempered woman who gave her a home. He advised his aunt to be rid of the young viper as soon as possible, and meanwhile to leave the care of her entirely to servants.

His strong nature impressed itself upon Lady Thorndyke's weak one, as red-hot iron cauterises tender flesh. She believed all he said while he was with her, and conceived a distrust of Joan; but Gallon had an important deal on in the City for Monday, and was obliged to leave early, having extracted a half-promise from his aunt that the intruder should go forth that day, or at latest the next.

He had not seen Joan Carthew, and therefore had not reckoned on her strength and magnetism as forces powerful enough to fence with his influence.

Joan felt the difference in her patroness's manner, as a swallow feels the coming of a storm. She knew that there had been a visitor, and she guessed what had happened. She grew cold with the chill of presentiment, but gathered herself together for a fight to the death.

"You look much better this morning, my dear," began Lady Thorndyke nervously. "You will perhaps be well enough to get up and be dressed by and by, to drive out with me, and choose yourself a doll, or anything you would like. You will be glad to hear that—that my nephew and I called on Mrs. Boyle yesterday, and—she is sorry if she was harsh. In future, you will not be living on her charity. I shall give her a small yearly sum for your board and clothing. You will be sent to school, as you ought to have been long ago, and really I don't see how she managed to avoid this duty. But in any case you will be happy."

Joan turned over on her face, and the bed shuddered with her tearing sobs. She was not really crying. The crisis was too tense for tears.

"Don't, dear, don't," pleaded Lady Thorndyke, feeling horribly guilty. "I will see you sometimes, and——"

"See me sometimes!" echoed the child. "You are the only person who has ever been kind to me. I can't live without you now. I won't try. Oh, it was cruel to bring me here and show me what happiness could be, just to drive me away again into the dark!"

"But——" the distressed old lady had begun to stammer, when the child slipped out of bed and fell at her protectress's feet.

"Keep me with you!" she implored. "I'll be your servant. I'll live in the kitchen. I'll eat what your dog eats. Only let me stay."

She wound her slim, childish arms round Lady Thorndyke's waist, her eyes streamed with tears at last; her beautiful hair curled piteously over the grey-silken lap. She was at that moment a great actress, for though she was honestly grateful, she neither wished nor intended to live in the kitchen and eat what the dog ate. She would be a child of the house or she would be nothing. Her beauty, her despair, and her humility were irresistible. Lady Thorndyke forgot George Gallon and clasped the child in her arms, crying in sympathy. "If you care so much, dear, how can I let you go?" she whimpered.

"I care enough to die for you, or to die if I lose you!" Joan vowed.

"You shall not die, and you shall not lose me!" exclaimed the old lady, remembering her nephew now and defying him. "You shall stay and be my little girl."

Joan did stay. Before the week ended, and another visit from George Gallon was due, she had so entwined herself round Lady Thorndyke's heart that the rather cowardly old woman had courage to face her nephew with the news that she meant to keep the waif whom "Providence had sent her."

At first there was no question of formal adoption. Joan simply stayed on and was allowed to feel that she had a right to stay. Gallon did all he could to oust her, for his mind had telescopic power and brought the future near. He feared the girl, but he dared not actually offend his aunt, lest he should lose at once what he wished to safeguard himself against losing later.

The child made Lady Thorndyke happier than she had ever been. Her presence created sunshine. She was never naughty like other children; she was never sulky nor disagreeable. A governess was procured for her, a mild, commonplace lady whom Joan despised and astonished with her progress. "I was born knowing a lot of things which she could never learn," the little girl told herself scornfully. But she did not despise

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"Joan Carthew had not a penny in the world."

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George Gallon, whom she occasionally saw, nor did she exactly fear him, because she believed that she would be able to hold her own in case the day ever came for a second contest, as she foresaw it would.

When she had learned all that the governess knew, and rather more besides, she was sent to a boarding-school in Paris to be "finished." After her first term, she came back to Brighton for the Christmas holidays, so grown up, so beautiful, and so distinguished that Lady Thorndyke was very proud. "What shall I give you for Christmas, my dear?" she asked. "A diamond ring?"

Joan kissed her withered leaf of a hand.

"If you love me," she said, "give me the right to call myself your daughter. That is the one thing in the world you have left me hungry for. Will you adopt me, so that I can feel I am your own, own child? Think what it would be if anyone ever claimed me and took me away from you!"

Joan's love was not all a pretence. She would have been a monster if it had been, instead of the mere girl of seventeen she was, with a large nature, and capacities for good which had been stunted and turned the wrong way. But the vicissitudes of life had taught her to be as observant as she was critical, and she knew as well how to manage Lady Thorndyke as if the kind old creature had been a marionette, worked with strings. It was not necessary to let her benefactress know all that was in her mind, or how she had calculated that, to be the rich woman's legally adopted daughter ought to mean being her heiress as well. While she pleaded to be Lady Thorndyke's "own, own child," she was saying to herself: "I will make a good deal better use of the money than that hateful George Gallon."

No normal young man, and no sentimental old lady, could have doubted the disinterestedness of a girl with eyes like Joan Carthew's. Lady Thorndyke was delighted with the dear child's affection, and promptly sent for her lawyer to talk over the matter of a formal adoption. She also announced her intention of altering her will, and leaving only twenty thousand pounds to her nephew, the bulk of her property to Joan, "who would no doubt be greatly surprised."

Thinking it but fair that George should be prepared for this change in his prospects, she told him what she intended to do, in the presence of her solicitor, lest there should be a scene.

There was no scene, for George was a sensible man, and saw that a little butter on his bread was better than none. But he hated and respected Joan at the same time, because she had triumphed. He was not quite beaten yet, however. He had a talk, which he hoped sounded manly and frank, with his young rival, told Joan that he bore her no grudge, and paid her a compliment. When she went back to school, flowers and sweets began to arrive from "Cousin George"; the girl saw the game he was playing and smiled.

When she came home for Easter, he proposed. He got her on a balcony, by moonlight, where he said that he had loved her a long time, and could not wait any longer to speak out what was in his heart.

"Your heart!" laughed Joan, with all the insolence of a beautiful, spoiled young heiress of eighteen, who has pined for revenge upon a hated man, and got it at last. "Your heart!" It was delicious to throw policy to the wind for once and be frankly herself. She was thoroughly enjoying the situation, as she stood with the pure radiance of the moonlight shining down upon her bright head and her white, filmy gown. "What a fool you must think me, Mr. Gallon! It is your pockets you would have me fill, not your heart. I acknowledge I have owed you a debt for a long time, but it is not a debt of love. When I was a forlorn, friendless child, you tried to turn me out into the cold; and if I hadn't been stronger than you, you would have succeeded. Instead, it was I who did that. I have always meant to pay, for I hate debts. No, I will not marry you. No; nothing that your aunt means to give me shall be yours. Now I have paid, and we are quits."

George Gallon was cold with fury. "Don't be too sure," he said in his harsh voice, which Joan had always hated. "They laugh best who laugh last."

"I know that," the girl retorted; and passing him to go indoors, where Lady Thorndyke dozed after dinner, she threw over her shoulder a laugh to spice her words.

The next day she went back to school, pleased with herself and what she had done, for she was no longer in the least afraid of George Gallon.

Some things are in the air. It was in the air at school that Joan would be a great heiress. The girls were very nice to her, and Joan enjoyed their flatteries, though she saw through them and made no intimate friends. When in June, shortly before the coming of the summer holidays, the girl was telegraphed for, because Lady Thorndyke

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had had a paralytic stroke and was dying, there was a sensation in the school. Of course, as Joan would now inherit something like a million, she would not return, but after her time of mourning, would come out in Society, well chaperoned, be presented, and probably marry at least a viscount. The other girls were nicer than ever; tears were shed over her, and farewell presents bestowed.

When Joan arrived in England, Lady Thorndyke was dead, and the girl was sad, for she realised how well she had loved her benefactress. After the funeral came the reading of the will. The dead woman's adopted daughter, the servants, and George Gallon were the only persons present besides the lawyer. Joan's heart scarcely quickened its beating, for she was absolutely confident. Any surprise which might come could be merely a matter of a few thousands more or less. She sat leaning back in an armchair, very calm and beautiful in her deep mourning. George Gallon's eyes never left her face, and they lit as at last she lifted her head, with bewilderment on the suddenly paling face.

"'No-o,' replied George slowly."

There had been a few bequests to servants and to a favourite charity. Everything else which Lady Thorndyke died possessed of was left unconditionally to her nephew, George Gallon. There was no mention of Joan Carthew. The will was dated ten years before. Lady Thorndyke had put off making the new one, and death had rendered the delay irrevocable. Joan Carthew had not a penny in the world; save for her education, her clothes, and the memory of six happy years, she was no better off than on the day when she threw herself under Lady Thorndyke's carriage.

She could not believe it was true at first. It was like having rolled a heavy stone almost to the top of an incredibly steep hill, to find oneself suddenly at the bottom, crushed under the stone. But the solicitor's stilted sympathy, and the look in George Gallon's eyes, which said: "Now perhaps you are sorry for having made a fool of yourself," brought her roughly face to face with the truth. At the same time she was stimulated. The words, the look, braced her to assume courage, if she had it not.

She was down—very far down; but she was young, she was beautiful, she was brave, and life had early taught her to be unscrupulous. The world was, after all, an oyster; she would open it yet somehow and make it hers; this was a vow.

When the solicitor had gone, George remained. The house was his house now.

"What do you intend to do?" he inquired.

"I have my plans," Joan answered.

In the man's veins stirred a curious thrill, which was something like dread. The girl was wonderful, and formidable still, not to be despised. He half feared her, yet he

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could not resist the temptation to humiliate the creature who had laughed at him.

"It is a pity you never learned anything useful, like typing and shorthand," said he patronisingly. "If you had, I would have taken you into our office as secretary. There's two pounds a week in the job, and that's better than the wages of a nursery governess, which, in the circumstances, you will, no doubt, be thankful to get. After what has passed between us, you would hardly care, I suppose, to accept charity from me, even if I were inclined to offer it."

"I would take no favour from you," said Joan, in an odd, excited voice. "But I *will* accept that secretaryship; you'll find me competent."

George stared. "You don't know what you are talking about. You have no knowledge of typing or shorthand."

"I am expert in both. I thought, as a woman with large property, the accomplishments might be useful to me, and I insisted on taking them up at school instead of one or two others not as practical."

"You would actually come and work in my office, almost as a menial, on a salary of two pounds a week, while I enjoy the million you expected would be yours?"

"Beggars musn't be choosers," returned Joan drily. "You don't withdraw the offer?"

"No-o," replied George slowly, doubtful whether his scheme of humiliation had been quite wise, yet finding a certain pleasure in it still. "The girl's expression is queer," he said to himself. "She looks as if she had something up her sleeve."

He was right. Joan had something "up her sleeve," something too small to be visible, yet large enough, perhaps, to be the seed of fortune.

NONE NEEDED.

"WHAT! not a wreath of mistletoe?"
I said to little Polly,
She answered, "No," then faintly, "but
I've made a wreath of holly."

"But," quoth I, "will that do?" Said she,
Her tone not melancholy,
"The light is dim, and—must we know
The wreath is made of holly?"

No need to tell her—knew she well
That mistletoe and holly,
Light dim and bright, are all the same
To us—to me and Polly!

G. T. EVANS.

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The Flying Dutchman

By Max Adeler

"AS fur the *Flying Dutchman*," said William Potsherd, the venerable mariner, sitting in the reading-room of the Seamen's Mission after the prayer-meeting, and striking the table with the palm of his hand, "they needn't tell me there ain't none, fur I seen her with me own eyes and sailed on her.

"It was that time I was telling you about, when I was fus' mate of the steamer *Indian King*, and the cyclone capsized her, and I clutched a boat as I came up, and clumb into her. Then I seen Em'ly Smith, the cap'n's coloured stewardess, floating about, and I fished her out, and we found ourselves alone on the boiling sea.

"So we run along fur sixteen hours, me and Em'ly Smith. She was as black as night-before-last—blacker; black and fat. But she was cheerful. She belonged to the Sons and Daughters and Brothers and Sisters of Aaron, of the Tribe of Levi, of Rising Sun, Philadelphia, and she sung them camp-meeting hymns to keep up my sperrits; and it did keep them up. As I set there a-looking at her, I says to myself: 'If the wust comes to the wust, most likely it's going to be my luck to have to eat you, Em'ly; fur when the choice is between an able seaman, as a useful member of society, and a plain cook, there ain't no choice; and I do believe you'd eat tender.'

"But after a while I seen a queer-looking craft coming towards me with all sails set, and I thought she'd run us down; but I ketched at the stay-chains as she reached me, and, tying the painter of the boat to them, I was on deck in a minute, and then I lifted Em'ly Smith out.

"I dunno how to tell you what that craft looked like. A kind o' dusky red all over her decks and her sails and her bulwarks, and the red a kind o' soft glow like the head of a match in a dark room. I never seen nothing jus' like it afore or

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since, excepting it was punk out in the woods; only that ain't red, and this ship was red and sort o' dim, shiny like frum stem to stern. And she flew through the water faster'n any steamer you ever seen.

"Well, sir, I'm no coward, but I own up I was skeered with the look o' the boat; and not a man in sight on deck, not even at the hellum; the sails jus' a-bulging and the vessel a-whipping over the sea, the same 's if she was a bird.

"So then I seen a light or something a-shining through a crack in the cabin aft, and I says to Em'ly Smith—

"'Now, Em'ly, you just set there on that bucket till I look around and investigate'; and I made my way boldly to the cabin, and went down and shoved the door open and walked right in, ezzackly 's if I was the skipper himself.

"There was two men a-setting at the table in there, the queerest dressed you ever seen, and they was a-playing some kind o' game with cards that was so black they might 've been made of charcoal fur all the difference I could see.

"Then one o' the men who set a-facing me looks up just as he was going to play a card; and when he seen me, he says—

"'Well, you *have* nerve! Where did you come frum? Where's your manners? Don't you know this is private?'

"Then I ups and tells him, and fur a minute he looks at me 's if he'd half a mind to chuck me overboard, and then he says—

"'What's your name?'

"'William Potsherd, mariner,' says I, 'of Tom's River, New Jersey,' and then I explains to him how I happened to drop in on him; but leaving out the particulars about Em'ly Smith.

"'Set down, William,' says he, after reflecting for a little while. 'I'm Cap'n Schmitt, the skipper o' this yer craft, and this is my fus' leftenant, Vanderwerken.'

"But the fus' leftenant seemed sour about something, fur he jus' looks at me and scowls; and when I took a chair, he went over into the corner by the cupboard and scowled wuss and wuss.

"'And so you thought you'd ship with us for the v'yage, did you, William?' says Cap'n Schmitt, with a grim smile on his face—a face all scarred and gashed with wrinkles. Why, when you looked at it, he seemed 's if he might be a thousand years old or more.

"'I dunno,' says I, 'about no v'yage. That depends where you're bound to,' says I.

"'Bound!' he says, half a-larfing. 'We're bound to Tartaroo,' says he, 'if you know where that is, and we're a long time a-gitting there.'

"'Where're you frum,' says I.

"'Where're we frum, Vanderwerken?' says he, a-turning to his fus' leftenant and larfing three-quarters this time.

"But Vanderwerken jus' scowled and grunted and grunted and scowled and said nothing. Then the Cap'n looks at me ag'in serious, and says—

"'Never you mind, William, where we're frum. It's so long ago I've almost clean forgot.'

"'Don't you keep a log?' says I.

"'Why, dog gone it, William,' says Cap'n Schmitt, 'I've writ and writ till I reckon I've about wore out the alphabet. I've writ all over the cabin walls and the furniture and the poop-deck and the sails! Log! I give her up,' says he, 'more'n a hundred years ago.'

"'And that's a good while, too,' says I, jus' to be kind o' sociable.

"'I've been a-sailing yer since 1644,' says he. 'Sometimes it seems to me like a million years, and then ag'in sometimes it seems 's if it begun only last Tuesday a week. My head's got queer over it,' says he, 'so that really I'm not jus' sure if I'm real or unreal. Would you mind poking me with your finger, Billy, and telling me what you think?'

"So, jus' to obleege him, I jabs him a couple of times in the cheek and the shoulder, and I says to him—

"'Cap'n Schmitt, in my opinion you're not real real. You're about like tallow or cheese; you give when I poke you.'

"'Half real and half unreal, s'pos'n we say,' says he. 'Maybe so. I'm not flesh and I'm not sperrit. That's my view, too. What d'you think o' that, Vanderwerken?' says he, a-turning once more to his fus' leftenant. But the fus' leftenant he sniffles and scowls and looks at the cabin roof and declines to answer.

"'Where did I understand you to say you hail frum, William?' says Cap'n Schmitt.

"'Tom's River,' says I.

"'And where's that?'

"I told him; and when I mentioned Barnegat Bay, I seen him kind o' flinch, and I knowed why before I left him.

"'That's in the United States, and the United States is the greatest country on this earth,' says I; and then, knowing he hadn't heard any news lately, I went on and told him about General Washington and the Revolution.

"'General Washington?' he says, trying

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to remember. 'Was that the man that was left, a little baby, in the bulrushes?'

"'No, no!' says I. 'He was fust in peace, fust in war, and fust in the hearts of his countrymen. You've got your mind on Moses.'

"'Hah!' says he, 'maybe I have. I get mixed on people somehow, nowadays. And how is things, William, amongst the folks on shore? I git to hankering after 'em now and then. And speaking of babies ah, Billy!' says he to me, a red tear a-rolling over the crinkles on his face, 'what wouldn't I give to see one o' them ag'in? Tell me, William, do they still smile when the angels speaks to 'em in their sleep, and take notice, and all that kind o' thing, jus' the way they used to?'

"'Jus' the same,' says I; 'and shake their rattles and chew their gum-rings, and cry and keep the folks awake at nights. Jus' the very same.'

"'Took off my hat and cussed the thunderstorm.'"

"I seen a film gathering on his eyes as I spoke, and so I went on and told him about my baby grandson and his golden hair and blue eyes, and two lovely white front teeth and his cherry lips, until presently Cap'n Schmitt waves his hand at me and says—

"'Stop, William! Stop that! I can't stand it another minute!'

"Then he heaved a deep sigh, and he was about to speak when he caught sight o' Vanderwerken standing there in the corner. The Cap'n had something on his mind that he wanted to talk to me about private, and so he says -

"'Vanderwerken, jus' run up on deck for a few minutes and look at the glass, and see if we're in the Tropic of Capricorn or in Cancer.'

"Vanderwerken said he wouldn't go, and so Cap'n Schmitt flew at him and gripped him, and they had it over and over the cabin floor, until directly Cap'n Schmitt doubled Vanderwerken all up, jus' 's if he was putty, and flung him out and bolted the door. Through the window I seen Vanderwerken a-laying there, gradually coming back to shape ag'in, fust one dent bulging out and then another, jus' like one o' them rubber doll-babies, you know.

"Cap'n Schmitt then sets down ag'in by the table, and he says to me—

"'William, I'm a-beginning to git tired o' this kind o' thing. Here I've been a-setting and playing seven-up with Vanderwerken fur two hundred years, and it's gitting to wear on me—Vanderwerken won't learn to play checkers; and so I'm yearning fur land and sunlight and the comforts o' home, and seeing you makes me want 'em wuss. If I could once git ashore in a new place and begin life over ag'in, I believe I could live down my past. Don't you think I could, William?'

"'I dunno,' says I, 'because I dunno nothing about your past.'

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"'Don't you know,' says he, 'what's the reason this yer ship keeps a-flying over the seas? Where 've you been, William? It was this way: In 1644, while I was a-trying to take the ship around the Horn, there was an awful thunderstorm that kep' a-driving us back and nearly capsized us. It made me so mad that I stood out on the poop-deck and took off my hat and cussed the thunderstorm; and because I did that I was condemned to keep flying over the seas and never to come to port. Tough luck, William, don't you think, jus' fur cussin' at one little thunderstorm?'

"'Why don't you repent?' says I.

"'Repent, William?' says he. 'What's the good of repenting when repenting won't take off the cuss that was put on me? No, sir, if repenting would 've lifted it, it would 've been lifted long ago.'

"'And what will lift it?' says I.

"Cap'n Schmitt looked around to see if Vanderwerken was a-listening, and then, very solemn, he says: 'There's only one thing, William, that'll do the business, and that is fur a fair young maiden to marry me. And now look at it, Billy—if I can find a fair young maiden to marry me, the cuss will be removed; but, don't you see, I'm not 'lowed to go ashore to find a fair young maiden and to court her and to ask her—and there you are, blocked at both ends; no chance one way or another. Do you think that's a square deal on me, William? Blamed if I do. So what I want to do is to find that girl somehow and marry her and settle down and make a fresh start. Can you think how you could help me, Billy?'

"'Settling down's all right,' says I, 'and starting fresh's all right, too, but I don't know about marrying.' Then I looks him over and says: 'Because girls is more particular now than they used to be. You're no longer young, you know. Did you say 1644? Well, Cap'n Schmitt, you're two hundred and fifty if you're a day, and that would seem old to most girls.'

"'I know it,' says he, 'but I'm not so bad-looking, William, now, am I? And besides' (and then he looked around ag'in to find if Vanderwerken was a-lurking by the door), 'I'm jus' a-rolling in wealth.'

"'You are?' says I.

"'Jus' a-rolling in it.'

"'What are you wuth?' says I, fur that very minute it come into my mind like a flash of lightning that him and Em'ly Smith might fix up a match betwixt 'em if there was anything in it fur me.

"What am I wuth?' says Cap'n Schmitt. 'Well, maybe I can't put it in straight figures or in fractions, but, Billy, I pledge you my word I have billions of dollars and tons of diamonds and jewellery, to say nothing of fus' mortgages and Government bonds; more'n you can count,' says he.

"'Big talk,' I says, 'never went fur with me, Cap'n Schmitt. Seeing's believing, and nothing else is. Where is this stuff?'

"'It's buried,' says he, 'buried good and tight.'

"'Buried for good, you mean,' says I, just to draw him on.

"'Buried on the beach of Barnegat Bay,' says he, 'but buried where you can't find it without the chart; and I've got the chart. Howsomedever,' says he, 'the half of it goes to the man who finds the girl that will have me.'

"'Do you mean that, Cap'n Schmitt?' says I.

"'I'll write it and sign it and seal it,' says he. 'Half's enough for me if I have love's young dream along with it.'

"'Cap'n Schmitt,' says I, 'it comes to my mind that maybe I can help you out. But before we strike a bargain, tell me if you prefer a blonde or a brunette?'

"'It don't make no great difference,' says he, a-waving his hand; 'but brunettes is my favourites.'

"'Dark brunettes, or tollably light brunettes?'

"'Rather dark,' says he; 'but I don't care fur freckles.'

"'I think I know one that'll suit you,' says I.

"'I make no p'int about beauty,' says he. 'I want her to be soulful. Her soul must look out of her eyes. Her heart must throb in unison with mine—throb for throb. Git me such a wife as that, William, and half the treasure is yourn and welcome.'

"'Give me a glance at that chart, jus' for a minute, Cap'n, will you?' says I.

"Cap'n Schmitt turned around to get the chart out of the locker, when suddenly he dropped his hands and said—

"'What is that? D'ye hear that?'

"I heard it well enough. Em'ly Smith, out there in the forecastle, had struck up and was singing 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,' and she sung it fine, too.

"'Oh, that's nothing,' says I, fur I wanted to get my hands on the chart and to have the contract signed before I introduced him to Em'ly. 'That's Vanderwerken,' says I.

"'Vanderwerken's grandmother!' he

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says, wild with excitement. 'You have to steady yourself ag'in' something when Vanderwerken sings. That's an angel, or I'm no judge. Let me get out o' that door.'

"'Cap'n Schmitt,' says I, putting myself betwixt him and the door, 'I don't want no trouble, but you can't pass me till I see that chart.'

"And Vanderwerken set aside of her on another bucket."

"His eyes flamed fire, and he looked like a fiend as he drawed his cutlass and made at me. But I picks up a chair, and I says to him: 'Now, steady, steady, my man! Don't try no game o' bluff with me. Hand out that chart.'

"'I'll kill you!' says he, making a pass at me. 'Git out o' my way!' He struck at me, but I ketched the blade on the leg o' the chair.

"'You can't skeer me,' says I. 'What are you, anyway? You're nothing but a sceptre; and if I couldn't whip a sceptre, I'd be ashamed to go home and meet my relations.'

"He seen I meant business, so then he begun to halloa for Vanderwerken.

"'Never mind Vanderwerken,' says I. 'The door's locked; and i. it wasn't, I'm not afeared o' Vanderwerken.'

"Just then we ketched the sound o' Em'ly Smith's voice ag'in. She was on the eleventh verse of 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.' Cap'n Schmitt dropped the p'int of his cutlass and listened.

"'Heavenly, ain't it?' says he.

"'Yes,' says I, 'heavenly it is. And that's the girl I had in my mind fur you if you'd only play fair about that Barnegat Bay business. I never see such a fool as you—a-throwing away the only chance you're ever likely to git.'

"Then Cap'n Schmitt begun to quiet down, and he says—

"'She come along with you, did she?'

"'She did,' says I. 'I'm her protector; and I'm a-going to protect her, too.'

"'I'll tell you, William,' says he, 'what I'll do. Give me a look at her; and if I fancy her, half the treasure's yourn.'

"'No,' says I; 'I'm a-taking no chances. Give me the chart or lose Em'ly.'

"'Is that her name?' says he. 'Em'ly! I always thought it lovely. Em'ly what?'

"'Smith,' says I; 'pretty much the same name as yourn. Hardly any trouble to change it.'

"Cap'n Schmitt begun to think; and while he was setting there thinking, the thirteenth verse come a-floating in the cabin window, and it was clear to me something or other was making Em'ly Smith do her best. She sung like a canary. As her voice died away, Cap'n Schmitt got up and went to the cupboard and takes out the chart and hands it to me and says—

"'Billy, I'll do it! But you'll divide even with me if you get there fust? Give me your hand on it.' And so I shook hands with him, and then we went on deck.

"There was a kind o' half gloom, so's you couldn't see things quite plain. I glanced at the binnacle, and found the compass a-p'inting jus' the way the ship was a-going. It always did that. Then I looked at my watch, and it was jus' midnight. The works was a-going, but the hands never moved frum twelve whilst I was on that ship. Fur away in the forecastle I could see the whites of Em'ly Smith's eyes as we moved towards her.

"There she was, still a-singing, and Vander-

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werken set aside of her on another bucket. He had a-holt of her hand, and his eyes was shet, and he was jus' a-drinking in the music, perfectly happy.

"So when we come near, Cap'n Schmitt whispers to me—

"'She's somewhat darker than I expected.'

"'It's the gloom,' I says. 'She shows off better in the daylight.'

"'And I don't see,' says he, 'how we can honestly call her a fair young maiden; and that's the kind, you remember, that I have to have, to lift the cuss.'

"'She's thirty-six,' says I; 'and that's very young compared with two hundred and fifty; and as fur fair, what I think is that she has to be fair in the sense that she'll play fair—jus' be honest, you know; and Em'ly Smith'll do that every time.'

"Em'ly Smith stopped singing jus' then, and Vanderwerken, keeping his eyes shet, says: 'More! more! let's have some more, Em'ly.' So then Em'ly Smith starts in on the fifteenth verse; and as she drawed to the end of it, Cap'n Schmitt stepped over and kicked the bucket frum underneath Vanderwerken, dropping him on the deck.

"Then Cap'n Schmitt says to her—

"'Which verse was that, Em'ly?'

"'The fifteenth,' says she.

"'Now give us the sixteenth,' says he, and so Em'ly begun on the sixteenth.

"When she stopped, Cap'n Schmitt drawed me over to one side, and says he: 'I think maybe we can make a trade, William. Em'ly wouldn't be jus' my fus' choice, but still there's a charm about her, particularly about her singing. I'm a little shy with girls,' says he. 'Would you mind opening out the subject to her fur me?'

"So I sets down alongside of Em'ly, on Vanderwerken's bucket, whilst Cap'n Schmitt goes to the bulwark and looks over; and whilst Em'ly was a good deal set up by Cap'n Schmitt's offer, she felt she was obleeged to decline it. She said she was already engaged to Arcturus Williams, the President of the Sons and Daughters and Brothers and Sisters of Aaron, of the Tribe of Levi, of Rising Sun, Philadelphia; and that, anyhow, even if she was willing to throw Arcturus over, she should feel like going a little slow about marrying a man who seemed to her to be half sceptre and half pirate.

"Of course, I daresn't say this to Cap'n Schmitt, or there'd be trouble right off, and the Barnegat Bay treasure would never come my way; so I had to resort to duplicity.

"Calling Cap'n Schmitt over by the forecastle scuttle, I says to him—

"'Em'ly says she prefers Vanderwerken.'

"He was pretty mad. 'I'll have to keelhaul Vanderwerken yet,' says he.

"'But Em'ly has a kind heart, and she's willing to sacrifice her feelings to lift the cuss frum you; only she must have conditions.'

"'What conditions?' says Cap'n Schmitt.

"'She promised her ma afore she left home that if she ever got married, she wouldn't have any parson to marry her but Brother Wiley of the Brick Church; and if you're willing to wait till she can git him, she's yourn with love and kind regards.'

"'That's not unreasonable,' says Cap'n Schmitt; 'but what I want to know is: How am I and Brother Wiley and Em'ly Smith going to come together?'

"So we talked it over fur a while, and finally Cap'n Schmitt agreed that me and Em'ly should try to git ashore, and hunt up Brother Wiley, and meet Cap'n Schmitt's ship three miles off Barnegat Light on the fifteenth of March, at twelve o'clock midnight ezzackly.

"Then we shook hands all around, and Cap'n Schmitt tenderly kissed Em'ly goodbye. As I helped her over the side into our boat, I handed the Barnegat Bay chart to Cap'n Schmitt to hold fur a minute: and when all was ready, he put the chart at me and says—

"'Promise me now, William, that you will divide fair; but don't cross your breath to it, fur that won't go here!'

"Well, sir, I don't know what made me do it, but afore I could take the chart out of his hands I crossed my breath, and that very minute there was a loud BANG! and I was whirled round and round in the air and become unconscious.

"When I come to, I found myself laying in one end of the boat, whilst Em'ly Smith set in the other end singing softly to herself the nineteenth verse of 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.' The sun was jus' a-gitting up, and the flood tide was a-sweeping the boat into Delaware Bay. Well, we run ashore at Cape May, and Em'ly and me come home on the train. But both she and Brother Wiley backed dead out on the fifteenth of March, and on the sixteenth she married President Arcturus Williams, of Rising Sun.

"As for that Barnegat Bay treasure, there it's a-laying and there it'll go on a-laying, whilst William Potsherd, who might 've been a millionaire, can't rub two dollars together."

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THE HEART OF A MAN.

By ELLIS PARKER BUTLER.*

I KNEW him for many years—this lover of fair women, this bold and fickle trifler with hearts—and we were good friends, as friendships go; but he left me one day never to return, and without so much as saying "By your leave." I remember quite well the day he departed, and I was pleased enough to be rid of him then; but often now, when the world crowds hard upon me, I long to have him back again, for he was light of heart, and he knew how to bring the laughter to my eyes, and the ready tears, too. And now I can only laugh as tired men laugh, and my tears are few and bitter.

Oh, he was a jolly rake, this fellow—a very Ariel of Love! A Bacchus for Kisses! An Argus for Love-looks! A born lover, forsooth! Even before he could toddle across the floor on his chubby legs he practised the wiles of a lover, and lavished his love glances and pretty tricks on one old enough to be his mother, snuggling his curly head against her breast and touching her lips and cheeks and eyes with his soft hands. Or, again, he would reach up and crowd kisses upon her face and neck. And she, who was old enough to have outgrown such flirtations, urged him on. But I shall not blame her, for love excuses much, and, after all, she *was* his mother.

I do not mean to claim for him a heart differing from the hearts of other men. I have studied him deeply, in retrospect, since I decided to chronicle his love affairs, and I do not intend to praise or to blame him. He loved—persistently, frequently; but if he hid his deeper feelings beneath a froth of playfulness, it was because this heart of his was tender and feared rebuffs. He had good reason to know the pangs of one who has proffered his heart only to have it scorned. It was his earliest lesson in the ways of women. It was about the time he first donned the distinctive garb of a man, and it was at the seaside.

Why is it that a man's first love is given to a woman whose years exceed his own? Genevieve was at least twice his age, but he loved her at first sight—ravenously. He was a thoughtless fellow in those days, and to love with him was to seek to possess. He rushed upon her, casting away his calmer senses, and threw his arms about her neck in an ecstasy of affection, regardless that he had never been introduced, regardless that another was her *beau*, regardless that she was building a masterpiece of sandwork. He

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"About the time he first donned the distinctive garb of a man."

placed one foot on the house of sand and the other on her dress, and kissed her vehemently. Oh, woman! woman! What love you throw away! She spurned him. She grasped him by the shoulders and threw him down, and cried: "You are a bad, bad boy!" and he, poor fellow, cast himself upon his face and wept.

Shall I tell all his love affairs? Better let them rest. Some of the fair creatures he adored during those years are wives now, and husbands are jealous. There were kisses—love kisses—stolen from his sweetheart before the very eyes of their companions, who imagined it was a mere harmless "kissing game," and did not guess the joy he felt, nor fathom the guile that made him kiss every other girl in the circle before he chose the one he really wished to kiss. And, oh! the joy when She ran screaming from him, to be pursued; and how She fought when caught! - -for then he knew she wanted to be kissed!

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"Some of the fair creatures he adored."

There was one brown-haired sweetheart who lived in the land of faery, and who led him, wide-eyed and half-afraid, to the fairy realm in the pasture back of the red barn, and then cast him aside because he could not see the fairies that she said she saw. She could not understand that men were made for sterner things—for fighting Indians and a bold Swiss Family Robinson life.

Misunderstanding, yes, and deceit, these are the portion of the heart of man. For was there not the one with honest blue eyes to whom he gave his heart, and, under promise of eternal secrecy, showed the robin's nest, only to find the secret betrayed the moment his back was turned?

Love is sweet, but there are moments of the deepest pain. His love for his cousin was sweet, for he had her much to himself when she visited his house; but, oh! the humiliation and disgrace of having to bathe

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"Under promise of eternal secrecy."

and be combed before her! A man's heart revolts at that. I think it was about that time that he acquired the dislike for bathing that clung to him as long as I knew him. Nor is it soothing to see the one to whom you would gladly give up your last long slate-pencil going to school under the umbrella of your rival.

I remember one sweetheart he had who was sworn to marry him. Kate was wealthy, he knew, because her father kept two horses; but he did not care for that. He cared for her snapping black eyes and the manner in which she could tuck her skirts about her knees and swing, head downward, from a trapeze on which he could only hang by his hands. The first time he saw her do this "circus act," he felt she must be his for ever. It was a feeling of pride, perhaps, that led him to propose marriage. He knew that his fellows would burn with envy when he showed them his wife. He had vague

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"About that time he acquired the dislike for bathing that clung to him."

notions of dressing her in spangles and gauze after they were wed, like a queen of a woman he had seen at the real circus. He gave up Dorothy for this acrobat, and Dorothy cried because he had deserted her; but Dorothy was only sweet, and not an acrobat.

But he did not marry Kate. There was a long, steep terrace, and one day she pushed him down it, and he fell, bruised and weeping, against the fence at the bottom; and when he tried to scale the heights above him, she pushed him back again and again, laughing at his tears and mocking him until his admiration was swallowed up by his rage, and he remembered Dorothy as he had seen her last, pensive and fair, looking wistfully upon him as he played in the early moonlight before her window; and he longed to go back to her, but he could not, for Dorothy was sick and could see no one. It was early autumn when she died, and for weeks he remembered her as he had seen her last at the

'Going to school under the umbrella of your rival."

window. He was faithful to her a long, long time, and carried a keepsake in his pocket at which he often looked, and he felt he could never again be anyone's *beau*.

His heart was weary of love, and his limbs ached with growing pains. He went much with the other men of his age, and learned to smoke cornsilk and cigarettes. For the first time in his life he had no sweetheart, and he wanted none. He decided that he would never marry. He would wait until he met Dorothy, and then he would explain how he had come to desert her, and would beg her pardon, and she would tell him that he was the only boy she had ever cared anything about, and they would be happy, up there.

Then the new family moved into the vacant house across the street. There was one boy in the new family, and he was strange in the town, and stood diffidently watching the other boys play. It was only

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"It was only right to invite him to join in building a fort."

right that this friend of mine should show some courtesy to the stranger and invite him to join in building a snow fort. There were two sisters of the strange boy, and one was tall and fair, with golden hair and blue eyes, and a sweet seriousness that made one's heart beat faster. That day he gave her brother his new pocket-knife, and it was but a few days after that he carried her books on the way to school.

Was he faithful to her, this reckless lover? That I shall not tell, for he went away before long, never to return. I remember quite well the day he departed. It was the day I donned my first long trousers. He was with me in the morning, and in the evening he was gone—and no one can bring him back—My Childhood Self. But if he carried with him my happiest days, I cannot complain, for he left me the heart of a man.

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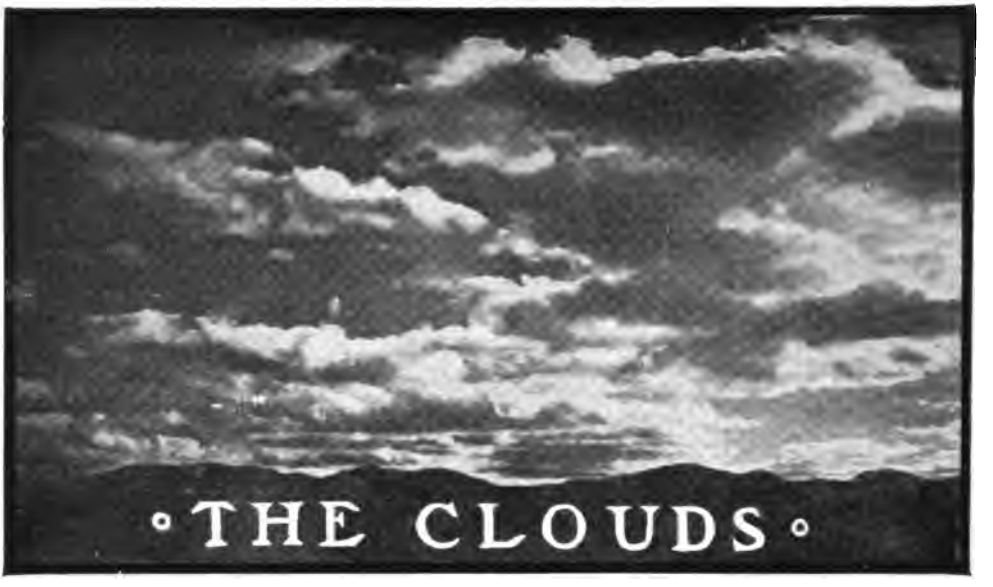

By F. S. HOPPIN, Junr.*

THE clouds in their coming and going, their form and colour, represent to most of us the outward and visible sign of the weather, and yet we never seem to learn how to prophesy rain, or snow, or sunshine from them. The United States Weather Bureau, which justifies its existence more fully and effectively each year, makes, however, good use of the cloud signs in preparing its weather forecasts, and even publishes a table with photographs of the different varieties of clouds and their significance.

This table must not, however, be taken too literally, for though cirrus clouds with frayed edges mean increased cloudiness or rain or snow, cirro-cumulus clouds, like those on page 141, are typical of fair weather, and cumulus thunderheads generally precede local rains or thunderstorms, yet all these general predictions are so modified by local conditions, that even with the help of the scientific forecasts much local weather wisdom is necessary to get practical results.

The clouds, as a matter of fact, are noted by the Weather Bureau people chiefly because they show the direction and the velocity of the higher air-currents of the atmosphere. They are like chips which show the flow and eddies of a stream. Their speed is almost inconceivable to us, who have watched them floating apparently with scarcely any motion across the sky, seeming what an old weather-prophet called them, "those most tranquil travellers, the clouds, whose very motion is rest." The fastest horse and automobile records, and even fastest steam-engine speed, a mile in thirty-two seconds, is easily outdone by the quietly drifting of masses and mist. A mile in thirty-six seconds is not at all an uncommon velocity for the upper clouds, and they have been observed to do a mile in eighteen seconds.

Everyone has seen and felt the clouds we know as fog, either on the seashore as they drift landward from the ocean, or after a hard climb from a hot, clear air of a valley to the cool mist of a mountain-top. These fog-clouds are formed generally by a current of warm, moist air striking the cold side of a mountain, or by the warmer breezes from the ocean passing over the land, which has cooled off more quickly than the sea. According to Prof. McAdee, of San Francisco, the thick fogs that form with daily regularity over the harbour of San Francisco at certain seasons of the year are caused by the mixture of air-currents, a warm current passing under or across a cooler one, producing many extraordinary cloud forms, as in the photograph on page 142. This

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THE CUMULUS CLOUDS THAT COME UP SLOWLY OVER THE HORIZON.

process of mixture, as it is called, is now thought to have much to do with the formation of all clouds. The wavelike appearance is generally due to the passage of the more rapidly moving air-current over a slow one, or of a wave-current crossing a motionless portion of the air. The so-called mackerel sky is the result of two currents crossing at right angles.

The dimensions of single clouds, as far as the area covered by their base is concerned, varies, as anyone can see, from the cloud the size of a man's hand to that which covers the entire visible heavens; but the height of clouds can be observed more definitely and can be estimated with convincing accuracy, and it is this height that largely determines their contents and characteristics. A great cumulus thunderhead, towering up on the horizon like a huge flamboyant iceberg, is often higher than the highest Alps would be if they were piled on top of the Himalayas. It is not unusual for these clouds to measure five, six, or even eight miles from their flat, dark base, hovering a mile or two above the world, to their rounded, glistening summit, splendid in the sunlight. And in these eight miles the changes of temperature are as great

THE ATMOSPHERE IS NEVER SO CLEAR AS WHEN THE CHINOOK CLOUDS APPEAR.

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CHINOOK CLOUDS FORM ON THE EAST SLOPE OF THE ROCKIES AND TRAVEL FAST, THOUGH APPARENTLY STATIONARY.

as those over many thousand miles of the earth's surface. These clouds contain strata of temperature, narrow belts of freezing cold alternating with large distances of rainy mist and frozen snow and ice particles. There is often more than one series of these belts of mist, snow, and ice in the same cloud. Hailstones which are formed from a snow particle that falls from the upper strata, and is frozen hard in the freezing belt and coated with added ice in the wet belt, are often found with a series of layers in their formation, showing that they have passed through this succession of cloud strata more than once on their way from the upper air to the earth. If we could reach these cloud tops in the summer, they would be the most ideal of summer resorts, for while the world below is sweltering with the thermometer at 90 in the shade of the cloud itself, and of untold degrees in the sunlight, the white top of that same cloud will be cold as the Polar ice-fields in midwinter. The temperature has been found to vary in the same cloud from 80 degrees F. at the base to 74 degrees below zero at a height of eight miles. The rounded form of cumulus clouds results partly from the manner of their oration and partly from the friction of the air they pass through. This friction, of course, is greater at the sides and tends to round their outline.

This speed is not always a sure indicator of the rapidity of the air-currents, because clouds form and dissolve so rapidly as to nullify, to a great extent, the force of the wind carrying them in any one direction.

The base of a big cloud may frequently be observed to move faster than the top, causing the latter to topple over. Another cause of the shape of these great clouds, and of the constant changes that take place in them while we watch them growing and moving up over the horizon, is that they often contain masses of vapour at a temperature below freezing and yet unfrozen. When a snowflake or an ice-crystal falling from the upper part of the clouds disturbs a mass of this cold vapour, the shock may start sudden congealation and cause a huge white puff to appear in the cloud.* Electricity has probably much to do with cloud formation, but in just what way the scientists have not yet determined. There are also theories in regard to the part played by small particles of dust in the formation of mist, one idea being that

* We see something like the same result in the round puff of smoke from the smoke-stack of a railway locomotive.

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AFTER LEAVING THE MOUNTAINS, THESE CLOUDS SOON DISSIPATE, BUT OTHERS QUICKLY TAKE THEIR PLACE.

every drop of mist is formed around a small dust particle.

As sponges and water reservoirs the clouds are wonderful beyond our imagining. They hold high in the air masses of water of a weight and volume equal to that of our greatest lakes, and then let it overflow gently on the earth. Rarely indeed do these huge aerial dams break or overflow, and the cloud-burst, as we vividly call it, plunge down some river or valley, carrying ruin and destruction along with it. To estimate the amount of water raised to these reservoirs without a pump, held there in dams whose walls are of fog, and then poured out on the earth beneath, is possible even over very large areas; but the figures grow to such enormous sums that they convey nothing to our minds. But

THE FAMILIAR CIRRO-CUMULUS CLOUDS COVERING THE ENTIRE SKY ON A CLEAR MORNING.

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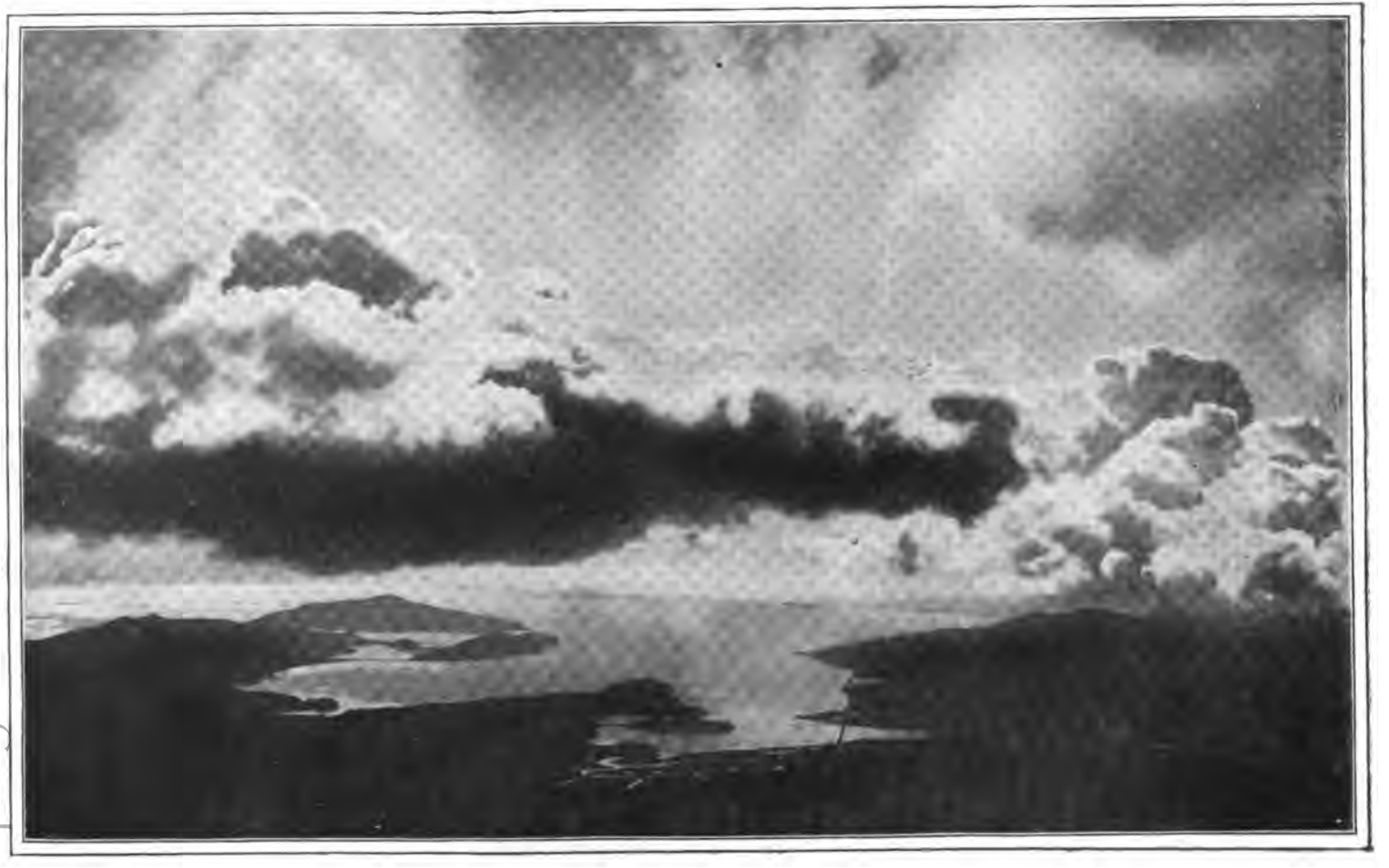

AS THE FOG RISES, IT TAKES DEFINITE SHAPE AND FLOATS AWAY AS A CLOUD. SAN FRANCISCO CAN BE SEEN IN THE DISTANCE, FOURTEEN MILES AWAY.

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take, for instance, a garden fifty feet long and one hundred feet wide. If a rainfall of a depth of one-hundredth of an inch falls on that little plot of ground, twenty-five gallons or two hundred and fifty pounds of water have been poured out on the garden; if an inch of rainfall, twenty-five thousand pounds of water, or twelve and a half tons, have been dropped on that solid earth! The weight of rainfall during the year, or even during a series of heavy showers, over any large area can be easily imagined without figuring. Prof. McAdee estimates that in New York City, where the average rainfall is 42·02 inches a year, seventy thousand tons of water are dropped during the twelve months on Manhattan Island alone.

The remarkable clouds in the illustration on page 140 are called chinook clouds from the chinook winds, of which they are the forerunners. These winds rise in the winter on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, and the work they do is a valuable help to stockmen throughout that country. They blow at first with immense velocity and at a temperature below zero, drifting the snow off the high plateaus and hills into the ravines. Then the winds die down and the temperature rises to a point well above freezing. The result of this is that the snowdrifts are solidified into a frozen mass which forms a storage supply of water for the rivers during the summer, and by preventing the rapid thawing that occurs when snow is left undrifted on the plains and hills, lessens danger of spring freshets. These chinook clouds generally give warning of the winds several hours in advance, coming up against a clear, blue sky in long lines, constantly disappearing as others replace them from behind. Even when they are black and threatening, no precipitation occurs. The atmosphere is remarkably transparent when the chinook clouds are in the sky. This is clearly shown by our photographs.

FOG SURGES AT MOUNT TAMALYSAIS, IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF SAN FRANCISCO.

A westerly wind current carries the fog with sufficient impetus to make it curve and splash upwards as it meets contrary currents.

A new variety of clouds was discovered not long ago. These are called luminous clouds, and were first seen during the nights of summer, shining with a brilliant, silvery whiteness at a height estimated to be over fifty miles above the world. The same clouds have been observed from England of a light blue and of a reddish yellow colour, and appearing rather late in the morning hours. They were visible during the season of long

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CUMULUS CLOUDS GENERALLY PRECEDE LOCAL THUNDERSTORMS.

twilight, and their light is supposed to come from the sun.

It is the constant change in clouds, their mysterious growth out of nothing on one side, and their equally constant return into the sky around them on the other, that makes them so fascinating to watch. There is nothing in the world more pleasant to photograph, and even the most primitive camera will sometimes catch remarkable effects.

The part played by the clouds in the distribution of our water supply, their effect on temperature and climate, their value as signs of the air-currents, and as sure prophets of approaching storm and sunshine, all these practical uses are of so daily and usual a quality that we barely notice their working, and only realise them when their results interfere with our business or pleasure. In fact, city folks probably only look to them for advice whether to carry umbrellas or not. Their marvellous beauty and infinite variety in sunset and sunrise, in midday and moonlight, which make them the most important feature of our sky effects, all this is brought home to us when we try to imagine what our world would be if, like the moon, our atmosphere had no moisture, and a huge, blazing sun in a never-changing, hard, fierce sky were our only idea of day.

A FOG PYRAMID.

A peculiar formation, occurring in this instance over a flat country. The fog in the distance lies over San Francisco and the Golden Gate.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—*The remarkable photographs used in this article were obtained through the kindness of Professor A. G. McAdee, of San Francisco, Professor A. J. Henry, of Washington, and Mr. E. J. Glass, of Williston, N.D., to whom we are glad to make this acknowledgment.*

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THE NUN OF NEWSTEAD.

By H. C. BAILEY.*

STORY of wondrous things is this, wondrous above all else in the world—a man and a maid. It is likewise the story of the Nun of Newstead, who was likewise somewhat wondrous, and a great grief to many of the devout, inasmuch as some called her a miracle, and others the fiend. Also the devout were much troubled by Ermyntrude, the sub-prioress, who, to her last hour, never heard the tale of the Nun without grievous and worldly laughter. This tale has been very long a-dying. No more than fifty years ago you might have heard it told in a Surrey farmhouse, as the beech-logs crackled below the bacon on a winter's night. It was a very solemn tale. For five centuries there have been men to swear they had seen the Nun appear, an awsome sight in the river mist, jumping from the grey ruins down to the swift dark stream to her death. And that is strange also, for the Nun never died. She never even lived. But she jumped.

And now we will go back to the beginning, which is not the maid, as you suppose, nor even the man. It is a hat of green velvet, and a windy March morning, and a Surrey down, and a light-hearted mare. Harry of Silvermere was riding that mare. Now, the mare Ethelfrida desired to gallop. Harry insisted that she should walk, because he greatly longed to laugh—to laugh till his voice failed him and his sides complained. You must not be shocked because he was laughing at his father. His father had gone that morning to visit a cousin. This cousin was a very godly man, but his wine came straight—said Sir Harry—from hell; and when young Harry of Silvermere thought again of his father's wry face and his solemn oaths, he crowed feebly with insatiable glee. Just then something danced and fluttered past Ethelfrida's tossing nose, and Ethelfrida made up her mind and put down her head. She would have her joke, too. She shot away over the greensward at her best speed, and Harry, twittering with laughter, caught at the reins and tried to swear, and choked. Then he heard someone else laugh. It was laughter clear and sweet as a blackbird's song, and it made Harry wake suddenly to the fact that he, as well as his father, looked humorous, so that the mare Ethelfrida was reminded all too soon of the strength of Harry's arm. Ethelfrida was swung sharply round, for her master to see the creature who dared laugh at Harry of Silvermere.

That creature stood on the brow of the wind-swept hill, its figure outlined daintily by the whistling gale. It was a creature whose hair glowed in the sunlight above the clear-cut white face of it and its laughing red lips. And it is likely, I think, that Harry's dark eyes grew big and bright as he looked.

"My hat! Oh, my hat!" said the creature, as Harry came nearer, pointing with a slim, white hand to the fateful hat that lay caught in the gnarled roots of a yew tree. Now, it is upon record that Harry of Silvermere had said to his friend, Sir Bertram, only the night before—

"Women? Bah! Why did God make women?" He was young, you know.

But we have it upon the word of the Lady Elaine, that now (though no one was there to see but a woman) Harry rode at that hat at a gallop, vaulted out of the saddle, caught the hat neatly, and sprang to the saddle again without checking Ethelfrida's stride. Also that he came back to the creature on the hill-top, and sprang down and fell on his knee, and so with low obeisance served her. He had discovered, perhaps, why God made women.

A low curtsy rewarded him, a sweet voice said: "I am sorry, sir." Harry rose to his feet; black eyes looked into brown.

"Lady, I am not," said he. She looked at him with her head on one side.

"But I laughed at you, sir."

"Will you do it again?" said Harry; and she did. Then she blushed.

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"And men hate being laughed at," said she, with downcast eyes. Harry shook his head; she looked up. Harry shook his head again. It is possible that he came closer. Below them was puffing and blowing. The mare Ethelfrida looked round; then the lady; then Harry.

"'Whom may I thank?' he said softly."

"Oh!" cried the lady, with a start and a little shudder. "Oh! thank you — and please go." The red cheeks of a fat priest loomed into sight. Harry caught her hand.

"Whom may I thank?" he said softly.

"The hat," said the lady. "Oh! please go!" and she looked back timorously at the puffing priest. Harry pressed her hand.

"Whom?" said he, his lips close to her cheek. She caught her breath.

"I am Elaine, Elaine of Effingham, sir," she murmured. Harry fell on his knee and kissed her hand. She blushed.

"Lady——," said the priest, puffing; "my child——" Harry sprang on his mare, bowed low, and was gone. The Lady Elaine looked at her hand, and then with a shudder she turned to the priest. In a minute Harry looked back in his saddle; he heard her voice, but could not hear the words.

"I wonder what she is saying?" he said aloud.

Now, what the Lady Elaine was saying was this: "I will not—not—not!"

Harry let Ethelfrida have her way and her head, and vanished. But the fat priest looked after him.

"A child of Belial," said the fat priest to himself.

Away went the child of Belial, plunging downhill till the slope grew over-steep even for his reckless moods; and all the way he was thinking of a thin, white hand, thinking how daintily the blood marks a white cheek—and of other things for which God made

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women. As he turned Ethelfrida's wanton nead for Cobham and Silvermere, he looked back once to Effingham Manor nestling in a combe among the leafless trees, and to Effingham Manor he took off his hat. And then, a wonder to heaven and earth, Harry of Silvermere began to sing—

"A maid there was, and her eyes were bright,
True love o' mine.
I kissed her hand, and my heart was light,
Dear love o' mine.
A maid there was, and my heart she took,
True love o' mine.
And all she gave was a kindly look,
Dear love o' mine."

Verses whereat he had laughed (not unjustly) the night before. Now he had no desire to laugh, not even at his father. He rode slowly, sighing, and Ethelfrida wondered.

When old Sir Harry came bustling back to the hall of Silvermere, he found his son sitting by the fire playing with his dog Tello.

"By'r Lady! And where is dinner?" cried Sir Harry.

"Dinner?" said his son, looking up.

"Now by St. Thomas-à-Kent!" cried Sir Harry—and said other things which you would not like to hear. So that a serving-man gave him a great jug of strong ale to stop his mouth and save him from further sin. "Of all wines," said Sir Harry, wiping his beard, "of all wines, give me ale!" The serving-man gave him another mug. "Am I a hogshead, fool?" cried Sir Harry, and sat himself down by the fire, stretching out his legs to the blaze. "Harry, you should marry," he said solemnly.

"The devil, sir!" cried Harry, who had been thinking the very same thing.

"And a very fit match!" said Sir Harry, chuckling. Harry shook his head.

"'Tis you would quarrel with my wife, sir. Two of a trade." Sir Harry consigned his son's folly to the nether world.

"I mean it, Harry," he said solemnly.

"The saints!" cried Harry.

"Let the saints be! D'ye know who is heir to Silvermere?" Harry touched his breast. "Aye, there's one fool! And the next—the next is your fool cousin Giles, who gives me cowslip wine, Harry! *Ventre du diable!* cowslip wine! Cowslip! That fool, with his stomach-ache drinks, is next heir to you! For the sake of the county, marry and cheat him! A girl with a hump or a girl with a temper, devil cares, but——"

"Sir Harry is served," said the seneschal, bowing. And Sir Harry went to dinner.

"But I care," said Harry. Sir Harry looked at him between mouthfuls.

"Why, so do I," he said slowly. He played with his wine-cup. "'Twere better to wait till you love, Harry." The jolly, boisterous voice had fallen to a whisper. "Your mother would have had it so."

Harry smiled. Because, though it may be better to wait till you love, it is bad to wait when love has come.

The very next morning Harry rode off to Effingham Manor. Bursting wildly down a hollow lane, Ethelfrida and he came on the fat priest, mounted, aptly enough, on a mule. Harry swept by like a whirlwind, and Father Clement did not see who it was (which was most fortunate), but he said to himself: "A child of Belial."

Harry did not hear; would not have heeded if he had. In five minutes he was at the door of Effingham Manor.

"The Lady Elaine?" said he to a serving-maid. At once the girl began to cry. Harry stared. "Is your lady sick?"

"No," said a gruff voice at his elbow. A tanned, scarred face met his eye. "The fiend! 'Tis old Black Harry himself, or—aye, you be his son, sir!" And the old soldier gave a mellow roar of laughter. "Now Heaven help all priests!" he spluttered.

Harry never loved riddles; was never less in the mood for them than then.

"Tell your lady I wait on her," he said sharply to the maid.

"Aye, aye, Molly, tell her," chuckled the seneschal. "Tell her, and—and Heaven help all priests!"

Scarce further than the threshold of Elaine's bower, Harry started and stopped. The blood began to come to his cheek; his eye kindled with wrath; his fingers twitched. More than ever he was like his father, black Sir Harry. For the Lady Elaine was very pale. Her eyes were red and full of tears; and she trembled. Harry sprang to her, fell on his knee, and took her hand.

"Lady, lady, what troubles you?" he cried; and then she gave a sob. In a moment Harry's arm was round her. She felt herself borne lightly to the window-seat. His warm, steady hand lay on hers, and he whispered—

"Lady, I am here to help!"

"You? You? Ah! why?" sobbed Elaine, and her kerchief hid her eyes. Very gently Harry drew the kerchief away and made the tearful brown eyes look into his.

"Do you not know, lady?" he whispered. And then to Elaine's pale face the blood came surging quick. About her waist Harry's arm pressed closer and closer yet. She was glad of the steady, quiet strength, and her

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eyes grew brighter beneath the modest, drooping lashes.

But suddenly she cried: "No! no! you must not!" and she tried to escape from Harry's arm, and failed. She had not tried hard.

"And why not?" said Harry, smiling down at his captive.

"Look!" said the Lady Elaine, pointing. "No! no, sir! Look!" Her little, white hand turned Harry's impudent eyes away from her, away towards a sober grey habit that lay limp on a chair.

"A very saintly garment!" said Harry.

"Saintly? Oh!" cried the Lady Elaine, and shuddered. "Oh, I will not—not—not!" and she sobbed full on Harry's shoulder.

"*Mort de ma vie!*" muttered Harry in amaze, and stroked her rippling hair. "My love—my dear love——"

"I am not your love—I am not anybody's love!" cried the Lady Elaine. "I—I—I am a nun—a silly nun!"

Harry brought out a rattling oath.

"Yes," said the Lady Elaine, sympathising deeply. "But I am, you know." Harry sprang up.

"No!" he shouted. "No, by all the saints and the fiends withal, no!" They heard that thunderous shout in the hall, and the seneschal chuckled.

"Now Heaven bless all priests!" said he.

But Harry's anger left him in a moment; in a moment he was cool again, purposeful and quiet—true son of Black Sir Harry ever.

"What is this tale, love?" he said, as he sat beside her again.

"I—I have no wealth nor lands, and——"

"Ah! who says that?" said Harry.

"Father Clement." A little dangerous smile began to come on Harry's face. "You see, I am but a beggar maid; and as they asked me——"

"Ah! who asked you?" said Harry.

"Father Clement." Harry's fingers tapped lightly on her hand. His smile grew wider. "My mother left the Manor to the Church, and so——"

"Ah! who told you so?" said Harry.

"Father Clement. That is why I was to take the vows and sign the parchment—to-day," her voice trembled—"to-day." The tears came again in her eyes.

But Harry began to laugh—long and low and mirthfully he laughed.

"The good Father Clement!" said he. He kicked at the nun's dress, lying limp and dolorous.

"And so ugly a dress it is!" said Elaine tearfully. Then Harry laughed aloud.

"Too ugly far for brown eyes; too ugly for wild-rose cheeks; alack for the good Father Clement! But—but—*tête du diable*, 'tis very fit for the good Father Clement!" And he slapped his hand on his thigh.

But the Lady Elaine was weeping.

And then, just then while Harry was drawing her closer, came a loud voice without—

"*Benedicite, benedicite*, my children all!" And Elaine clung to Harry and cried: "Ah; save me, save me, Harry!"

"That will I, love," he whispered; and, sudden, he sprang to the door and shot the bolts. Back he came to Elaine and whispered low in her ear.

Now, what he whispered, no man knows, for neither he nor Elaine ever chose to tell. This only we know (for the seneschal told), how Father Clement, the fat priest, came to the door and found it fast.

"My daughter," he said sweetly, knocking. And Elaine answered him: "Wait a little, my father."

"Wait but a very little, good father," said another voice. And the seneschal thinks that he heard laughter within. Father Clement thereupon knocked louder.

"Who is this with thee, my daughter?" he cried.

"I doubt you will not know him," said Elaine. And again the seneschal testifies to laughter within. Then, while Father Clement was speaking, she opened the door, and Father Clement beheld with joy that she wore the nun's garb. What he beheld without joy was the child of Belial coming out of an inner chamber.

"Sir!" said Father Clement, much horrified.

"Nay, father, be not angry," said the nun, with downcast eyes. "We—we were but dancing together, one last dance. And now I am ready to go with you—quite ready!"

Father Clement sighed with relief. He had counted on trouble.

"*Benedic, Domine*," he said piously, laying his hand on the nun's cowled head.

"Good-bye, Harry," said the nun.

"'Tis a shame, and I hate you!" said Harry, meaning his words for Father Clement, and standing sulkily aloof.

"Sir, you dishonour my cloth!" Whereto there was no answer at all. And then—

"Come, my daughter," said Father Clement, with a scornful glance.

"Come, Harry," she said, and she went

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out, with downcast eyes, through the hall where the servants wept. "Never grieve," was all she said. Without were Father Clement's mule, and mules for two monks more, and a palfrey for Elaine. Ethelfrida also was there tethered.

"Brother Dominic, to thee I commit this house," said Father Clement. Elaine started.

"Harry, good-bye," she said quickly. "Go back to Silvermere

"He sprang to the door and shot the bolts."

—to Silvermere—and think of me—no more." She caught him in her arms and kissed him, somewhat to his shame.

"Good-bye, Elaine," said Harry. He fell on his knee and kissed her hand. She drew

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it hurriedly away and turned to Father Clement, whose horror was writ large in his fat face. Then she mounted her palfry. In a moment Father Clement and his brother monk were up, and slowly they moved away. Harry stood looking after them.

"Go forth, young man, and repent," said Brother Dominic sternly, and Harry began to fumble with Ethelfrida's bridle.

"Art happy now, master monk?" he said as he began to mount.

"I rejoice in the godly purpose of our Sister Elaine," said Brother Dominic.

"So also do I," said Harry, settling himself very carefully in the saddle.

Now, all the way to Newstead Nunnery, Elaine said never a word. She scarce seemed to hear Father Clement's praises of her holy mind, and she drove her palfrey on at a pace that shook the fat monks unpleasantly. So they came soon to the grey walls standing in a bend of the deep stream, and Elaine sprang lightly to the ground.

"Art glad, my daughter?" said the monk.

"Canst not tell how glad, good father?" said Elaine.

"God's blessing is on this work!" said the monk.

"I wonder," said Elaine.

"Soon thou wilt not doubt," said the monk.

"Belike that is true," said Elaine.

There came to the gate Ermyntrude, the sub-prioress.

"Embrace the good sister, my daughter," said the monk.

"With good will," said Elaine, for Ermyntrude was buxom and pleasant to see; and the two nuns kissed in each other's arms. But Ermyntrude started back.

"Our Lady defend us!" she cried; and from Elaine she looked to Father Clement, and from Father Clement back to Elaine. Her little black eyes were dancing, her plump red lips were twitching.

"I am very glad I came," said Elaine modestly. "Are you?" But Ermyntrude said only: "So this is the Lady Elaine, Clement? This is the Lady Elaine?"

"As thou seest, my sister," said Father Clement. And Ermyntrude laughed.

"I never thought she would come," said Ermyntrude.

"Nor I, dear Ermyntrude," said Elaine quickly. "Nor I myself two days agone."

"Thank the saints that have brought thee to this pious mind, my daughter," said Father Clement, lifting up his eyes to heaven.

"The saints?" said Elaine doubtfully. And she looked at Ermyntrude. And Ermyntrude looked back at Elaine.

"The good saints!" said Father Clement. Elaine gave a sigh—a long, thrilling sigh.

"Ah! the blessed saints!" said she. Ermyntrude, fallen a little behind, was heard to chuckle. Father Clement smiled benignly. "And now let me sign the parchments and have done," said Elaine. Father Clement invoked a blessing on her good mind and bade her follow.

Now, the nunnery at Newstead had a terrace hanging over the river whereof you may still see fragments. Along this terrace came the party, and into the outer muniment-room at its end. There, with much jangling of keys, Father Clement brought forth a parchment.

"There must you put your name, my daughter—your worldly name that you now resign."

"But what is written above, good father?" said Elaine.

Father Clement laid one fat hand on the writing. With the other he gave a pen to Elaine.

"'Tis but the vows of your order, my daughter," said Father Clement. Elaine did not take the pen. Her hands were hidden under her gown. "The vows of all the good sisters—of every nun in Newstead."

Twilight was falling. The convent bell was ringing for evensong. It was dark in the muniment-room. Ermyntrude, the sub-prioress, opened the door, to give more light. And as the light came in, she screamed, and Father Clement cried out. For Elaine's gown was kilted high. But Elaine snatched the parchment and ran out.

"My name that I now resign, good father!" she cried aloud.

Father Clement ran after her, saying things whereof Ermyntrude afterwards reminded him. Then Ermyntrude lay shaking in spasms of laughter. The courtyard was full of nuns crossing to the chapel, and there in the twilight they saw a wondrous and unholy vision. A nun, with skirts high-kilted, ran lightly along the terrace, and after her puffed fat Father Clement, the convent's confessor, invoking saints and other things less holy. Fair in the middle of the terrace the nun stopped. Up on the battlements she sprang.

"Give you good-night, Father Clement!" she cried. "Good night from the new Nun of Newstead!" and down she dived through the mist to the river. There were shrieks and screams, and wonder in the convent, but

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"But the Lady Elaine sprang up."

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of that you shall hear so much as imports later.

Sir Harry and Sir Bertram were riding back together in twilight to Silvermere. They were near the castle when Sir Harry cried: "Why, there is Harry!" Bertram looked, shaded his eyes, and looked again.

"And what in wonder is Harry doing?" said he. For Harry went a little way towards the castle; then suddenly turned Ethelfrida round and rode back again slowly; then he spurred on to the castle again. This he did twice. Sir Harry looked at Bertram and rubbed his eyes.

"Plague the boy! I shall see double soon! Are we all mad?"

Bertram held up his finger for silence. They were riding noiselessly in the shade of the trees on the turf. Harry turned to the castle again. Then Bertram struck in his spurs, galloped on, and clapped Harry on the back with the full swing of his heavy arm.

"Why, Har-—— Our Lady be kind!"

For a very strange thing had happened. Under the blow of that nervous arm, Harry had fallen full forward on Ethelfrida's neck. His hat went rolling on the ground. Amazing to see and beautiful, about his face came tumbling long, rippling, red-brown hair. Ethelfrida, ready always for pranks, dashed forward, and Bertram, snatching hastily to save her rider, found himself holding aloft in the air a very strange and astonishing Harry—a Harry who was light in his grasp and soft, a Harry who blushed crimson beneath the cloud of her hair—her hair, for certain.

"Please, please put me down!" said she pitifully.

"Splendour of Heaven! *Feu d'enfer!* And what is this all?" spluttered Sir Harry, cantering up. "Who the fiend are you?" She drew back in the shadow of the trees. Bertram edged his horse between Sir Harry and her.

"If you please, I am very sorry," said Elaine; "but Harry of Silvermere sent me—I—I am Elaine of Effingham."

Then Sir Harry sprang down hastily.

"Elaine! By St. Thomas-à-Kent! And you are the little Elaine!" and he fairly took her in his arms and kissed her. "Long ago your father and I rode together. Art very welcome, lady. But why didst not come to my house? . . . . Oh—ah!" said Sir Harry, as the reason occurred to him. Through an awkward silence broke Bertram's voice—

"Lady Elaine, the night is cold. For sign you pardon my roughness, will you wear my cloak?" Bareheaded, on bended knee, he offered it, and Elaine, as she drew it close about her, became a woman again, queen of dull-witted men.

"But indeed the fault was mine," she said graciously to Bertram, gathering that overlong cloak with one slim, white hand. "And you both are wondering much what all this may mean? Why, so am I—a little!" She laughed gaily. They walked on towards the castle.

"You shall tell us, lady, so much as you will, and no more," said Sir Harry, bowing. "My house and my men are yours, for your father's sake and your own; and—if wrong hath been done——" his eyes began to glitter.

"If wrong hath been done, lady——" said Bertram's deep voice. Half from its scabbard he drew his sword, let it glitter faintly before her eyes, then clashed it home. But Elaine began to laugh.

"Oh, forgive me! please forgive me! I do not laugh at you—but 'tis so strange," and she laughed helplessly. "Oh, Harry! poor Harry!"

"What of Harry?" said his father quickly.

"He—he—he hath gone to Newstead Nunnery," said Elaine in the midst of her laughter.

"Newstead?" cried Sir Harry.

"Nunnery?" cried Sir Bertram. They were come to the castle now, and a man ran up to Sir Harry.

"Please you, sir, Master Harry's mare be come without Master Harry."

Sir Harry waved him away, and the three came together into the hall.

"Lady Elaine, I give you welcome to Silvermere," said Sir Harry, bowing low. "I pray you may honour it long." Suddenly Elaine blushed. Sir Harry saw that, and his dark eyes twinkled. Gravely he set for her his wife's chair, wherein no woman had sat since the Lady May died, ten years past. "And now will you tell us of Harry?"

"Oh, poor Harry!" said Elaine. She spread out her hands to the blaze, nestling in Bertram's cloak. "Indeed, I am very sorry, sir. You see, Harry came to me this day; and I told him I was but a beggar maid—and that he did not heed at all. Then I told him I was to be made a nun; and thereat he was much displeased, sir." She looked up at the two men archly, with her head on one side. They were smiling.

"He would be," said Sir Harry.

A scuffle at the door, then a shout.

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"*Tête du diable*, ye blind fools!" The door burst open, in came a struggling throng. A nun, a muscular, muddy nun rushed up the hall, two servants trying the while to stop—him.

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed Bertram, holding his sides. Sir Harry tumbled, shaking, into his chair.

"Fools, fools, bring me breeches!" cried the nun.

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed Sir Harry. "Let be, knaves, let be! Oh, Harry, Harry! 'twill be my death!" and he bowed himself and sobbed. But the Lady Elaine sprang up, and the cloak fell from her, but she did not care. In Harry's clothes she fell into Harry's arms.

"Harry, Harry, art hurt, dear?" and then she kissed him before them all.

"No, sweetheart," said Harry, and he kissed her again. "My dear beggar maid!" and he laughed, holding her away from him. But she blushed, and the tears came in her eyes. "Nay, love," and he caught her to him again and whispered in her ear.

"Truly, Harry?" she cried joyfully.

"As true as I'm wet," laughed Harry. "Now let me go dress, dear."

"But—what shall I do?" said Elaine. And the three men looked helplessly at each other. "Oh! have you no woman here at all—but me?" Elaine cried; and Sir Harry, and Harry his son, and Sir Bertram all together cried out for the seneschal's wife.

Now, the next morning it was announced that a certain Father Clement desired to see Sir Harry. This was all said as they were all going into the castle chapel for a certain purpose; and the tidings made Sir Harry somewhat hilarious. But afterward, when Father Clement was brought to the hall, and found Sir Harry sitting in his high chair, he knew at once why they called the Lord of Silvermere Black Sir Harry.

"So that is the monk Clement?" Sir Harry growled to his son.

"That is Father Clement," said Harry, and smiled benignly on the monk. Sir Harry did not smile.

"And you—you—dare come to me?" he said slowly, leaning forward over the table. And Father Clement began to repent.

"Why?" he cried sharply.

"I—I come for a lost child of the Church," the monk stammered. "A nun of the Convent of Newstead."

"A nun that never lived!" cried Sir Harry.

"There is the nun, sir," said Father Clement, pointing to Elaine. But Elaine began to laugh, and with her the rest.

"Nay, good father," chuckled Bertram. "There is your nun," and he flung full at Father Clement the nun's robe, all wet and muddy.

"I—I claim that lady," spluttered Father Clement.

"And so do I," said Harry, and chuckled.

"She hath taken the vows," cried Father Clement.

"Aye, to me, this morning," said Harry, and laughed loud.

"And last night to the Church," cried Father Clement. And then the laughter rang louder.

"Indeed, Father Clement, I fear you are much wrong," said Elaine.

"Much wrong—aye, much wrong, thou lying knave!" cried Sir Harry. "Wouldst tell the maid she was beggar, to make her come to convent—knave! lying knave? Wouldst have had her sign this parchment that gives thy convent her land, making the child think 'twas the vows of the order? ah, knave!" Father Clement grew something pale. "*Feu d'enfer!*" stormed Sir Harry. "And darest come to me now? *Tête du diable!* where be my men?"

Bertram had come quietly round the table, and he tapped the monk's shivering arm.

"I think you had better go, monk," said he. And Father Clement went. And when he was gone, Elaine turned to Harry.

"And 'tis really, really true, Harry? I am not a beggar maid at all?"

"Do you care, sweetheart?" said Harry.

"I like to have something to give you, Harry," she whispered. And now Bertram and Sir Harry departed speedily.

"Then give it me," said Harry. And she gave him a kiss.

But Father Clement told this story another way. He said that a fiend entered into the convent in nun's attire, had striven vainly to tempt the nuns, and at last, confronting the good Father Clement, had cast himself in despair down to the river. He confessed with sorrow that the fiend was still alive—sometimes in angry moments hinted that he lived at Silvermere. At that climax, Ermyntrude always laughed.

But the tale has flourished in spite of her, and many have sworn that their eyes have seen the Nun jump down through the mist. I doubt. For I think that Harry of Silvermere has better things to do than come back to this earth to jump. And wherever he is, I am very sure that the Lady Elaine is with him.

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THE SUPERSTITIONS OF SOME FAMOUS MEN:

RECALLED AND PICTURED BY
HARRY FURNISS.

THERE are various old verses and sayings which sum up and commemorate the superstitions of the ordinary men, women, and children; but in looking through various accounts of extraordinary folk, one is surprised to find how little education or experience of the world has done to remove superstition. The greatest and wisest men have not been proof against the errors and superstitious conceits of the age in which they lived. Cæsar thought the skin of a sea-calf to be a preventive against lightning, and expected some serious calamity to befall him in the course of the day if, at rising, he happened to put the left shoe upon the right foot; but we are not to say he was a fool.

Superstition — or, perhaps, the playing upon the superstitions of others — is much the same in the reign of King Edward VII. as it was in the time of King Edward VI.

A covetous courtier complained to King Edward VI. of Christ College, Cambridge, because the foundation was superstitious, consisting of a Master and twelve Fellows, in imitation of Christ and the Apostles, and advised the King to take away one or two Fellowships. But the King, instead, added a thirteenth Fellowship.

VON MOLTKE'S LAST GAME.

As in the case of King Edward VI., the dreaded number thirteen seems to have no terrors for the ex-Queen Regent of Spain. For it was at her suggestion that the infantile monarch of that country was given the name of "Alphonso XIII.," a proposition that met with the disapproval of many of the Castilian grandees, notwithstanding the fact that the godfather of the baby king was Leo XIII., whose pontificate, up to that date, had been, as it afterwards continued to be, one of the most fortunate of the Papacy. But to the day of the late Pope's death there were Italians who, adhering to the saying, "Call no man happy till he dies," were apprehensive that His Holiness was doomed to be the victim of misfortune; and should the career of the little Alphonso prove a chequered one, it is quite certain that the wise men of Madrid will trace the cause of his evil days to the ill-starred hour in which he was numbered XIII.

Another crowned head, in the person of the ex-Queen of Italy, is said to be so strong a believer in the ill-luck of sitting down thirteen to table that she will not make one of a party of that number; and when she held court, the second *aide-de-camp* in waiting had always to be ready to obviate the necessity of having the fatal number. For this purpose he was summoned one evening to attend the royal table, and did so, but meanwhile one of the invited guests had met with an accident and was prevented from coming, so the number was once more reduced to thirteen. The *aide-de-camp* was accordingly leaving the room when the King exclaimed angrily: "Return to your place! When once anyone has taken his seat at my table, he eats his dinner there!" It is to be inferred from this that the King did not share the superstition of his royal partner, and thirteen actually partook of the dinner!

At the weekly meeting of a Paris club, so the story goes, the members were aghast at the discovery that those present formed the fatal number thirteen, upon which the secretary was packed off, post-haste, into the street to drag in the first person he encountered, which individual happened to be the cabman who had driven him to the club. Upon matters being explained to Jehu, he willingly consented to come to the rescue, and he proved such jovial company that the invitation was afterwards repeated. A similiar experience befell the London Thirteen Club. Four tables were laid for thirteen at each, but

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the secretary was dismayed to find that the company numbered one short. Without displaying the impetuosity of the Frenchman, he quietly pressed one of the waiters into his service, and, like the Parisian cabby, the extra guest proved a welcome addition to the party, singing some capital songs and quaffing his nectar as though to the manner born.

Particular days sadly puzzle and alarm the superstitious, high and low. Henry XIV. of France ran counter to one of the old-established tenets of superstition in considering Friday lucky, and it was his choice to commence all his undertakings on this day. Since a very early age Friday had been looked upon as an unlucky day on which to pare one's nails: Delrio Disquisit ("Magic," p. 457) says that this was a current belief in his day. Much the same idea prevails amongst our neighbours on the other side of the "silver streak" at the present day, but it is of a wider character, embracing any day the name of which contains the letter "r"—*viz.*, *mardi*, *mercredi*, or *vendredi*. The good people of Holland, however, take quite a different view of the case, for they entertain the popular belief that anyone performing the operation of nail-cutting on a Friday becomes thereby exempt from the toothache.

The Romans, on the other hand, preferred not to attend to this item of the toilet on the day which I presume corresponded to our Friday; Wednesday being the day set apart for it, according to the following verse of Ausonius—

CROMWELL.

Ungues Mercurio, barbam Jove, Cypride crines.

Tuesday is popularly supposed to be the unlucky day of Mexico, the sentiment of the country concerning it being, like most Mexican proverbs, embodied in a jingle—

En Martes ni te cases, ni te embarques,
Ni de tu casa te apartes.

The literal translation of this means :—

On Tuesday neither be thou married, nor go forth,
Nor separate thyself from thy house.

Belief in the ill-luck of Tuesday is a Spanish superstition, but it is quite possible that this also is a native superstition in Mexico, because it was on a Tuesday (August 13, 1520) that the conquest of the capital city of Tenochtitlan (or Mexico) was completed.

Believers in the superstitions attaching to the ill-omened number 13, and the equally unlucky day Friday, may be interested to know that the famous General Von Moltke died on a Friday, after participating in a

NAPOLEON.

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favourite game of his known as "Black Lady." But more curious still is the fact that earlier in the evening the General had taken part in a rubber of whist, and performed the most unusual feat of taking the whole of the tricks, thirteen in number, off his own hand.

Yet another link in this chain of evil omens: Leaving the whist table on this fatal Friday, only to receive his call to the next world, Von Moltke consumed the sole remaining bottle that his cellar contained of his favourite Moselle, thus completing a

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

concatenation of circumstances so obvious in its ill-luck as to make it the subject of general comment amongst the believers in the creed of superstition.

Strange to say, many great men are very superstitious. Even the great Napoleon was a believer in the supernatural, for De Chaboules, in his "Memoirs of the Private Life and Return of Napoleon in 1815," says—

"Napoleon was a fatalist and superstitious, and made no secret of it. He believed in lucky and unlucky days. We might be astonished at this weakness if we did not know that it was common to the greatest men both of ancient and modern times. Napoleon, like all Corsicans, was sodden with superstition."

He seems to have had some belief in the "evil eye," or, at any rate, held that the mere look of a malignant person could poison food.

Sir Hudson Lowe was one day sitting on a sofa opposite the exiled Emperor in his room at St. Helena, and between them was a cup of coffee on a table. "Such a horrid countenance," says Napoleon, "I never saw. His physiognomy made such an unfavourable impression on me that I thought his look had poisoned it" (the cup of coffee). Napoleon ordered the coffee to be immediately thrown out of the window, adding: "I could not have swallowed it on any account."

M. de Constant tells the following story: "During one of Napoleon's campaigns in Italy, he broke a looking-glass over Josephine's portrait. He immediately despatched a courier to assure himself of her safety, and he knew no rest until this courier returned, so great was the impression of her death in his mind."

Cromwell believed September 3rd to be his lucky day, for on that day he was victorious at Dunbar and Worcester; yet, perhaps still more happily for him, he also died on the 3rd. All the Stuart sovereigns were believers in the supernatural; during the trial of Charles the First, when the head of his staff fell off, it is said he looked very sad, and James II. was mightily displeased because his mace-bearer stumbled at the entry into Dublin.

Despite Lockhart's assertion that had Sir Walter Scott's birth been antedated a matter of a hundred years, and that had the famous novelist sat on a judicial bench, he would have been without an equal at assisting juries to calculate the real worth of so-called evidence of any description of supernatural occurrences, there is no doubt that he was very credulous with regard to signs and tokens of a supernatural nature. His biographer tells us that ghosts, witches, and horoscopes were subjects with which his fertile fancy loved to revel. It is related that upon his saying farewell to Mungo Park, prior to the latter's second African expedition, from which he never returned, the explorer's horse happened to stumble at a ditch between the road and the moor. "I am afraid," remarked Scott, "this is a bad

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omen." Evidently the traveller attached little importance to the occurrence, for he smiled as he replied: "Omens follow those who look to them"; and, spurring up his steed, went off at a gallop. Upon Scott's mind, however, the incident evidently left an impression, for he invariably wound up his narration of the circumstance by remarking: "*And I never saw him again.*" Another instance of Scott's belief in occurrences of a supernatural nature occurred during the building of Abbotsford, which a Mr. Bullock was employed to fit up with certain appurtenances.

Scott, one night, during the term of Mr. Bullock's engagement, was aroused from his sleep by hearing strange and violent noises, and being, although credulous, anything but a timid man, equipped himself with defensive weapons and descended the stairs to repel the disturbers of his nocturnal repose. On his arrival below, however, he found everything perfectly right and quiet, without the slightest trace of any visit from midnight marauders. But the following night, in the words of Scott himself, "at the same witching hour, similar noises recurred." These incidents are related by Sir Walter in a letter to Terry, the actor, in 1818. Terry was taking breakfast with Erskine on the morning he received Scott's letter. When they were informed of Bullock's death, which had taken place, they discovered, on comparing dates, that he had died on the first occasion that Scott was aroused by the strange nocturnal noises at Abbotsford. The latter adhered to his belief that it was a supernatural coincidence, despite the current theory that an entrance to the building had been effected by some drunken workmen, or other disorderly persons, by whom the noises had been caused.

Writing again to Terry, Scott remarks: "Were you not struck with the fantastical coincidence of our nocturnal disturbance at Abbotsford, and with the melancholy event that followed? *I protest to you that the noise resembled half-a-dozen men hard at work pulling boards and furniture; and nothing can be more certain than that there was nobody on the premises at the time.*"

Thomas Carlyle, with all his strength of nature and keen common sense, was not free from superstitious belief.

It would be interesting to know if Parnell shared, with the Irish, the belief that a child born on Whit Monday will be hanged. For this gruesome superstition was, in popular belief, verified by the fate of one of the Phœnix Park murderers, who was born on a Whit Monday.

Jovial Sir Frank Lockwood was another superstitious member of Parliament. When I was asked to take the chair at the Thirteen Club banquet, Sir Frank was to be on my right. After accepting, he wrote asking to be excused, as he had another engagement on "that evening." After the banquet I went into the Garrick Club smoking-room and found him alone, reading a book.

SIR FRANK LOCKWOOD.

"Hallo, old chap!" said he. "Where have you been? I have dined in the club all alone, and have had a beastly dull evening!"

Lord Rosebery is superstitious. I recollect one Sunday afternoon walking in his grounds at The Durdans. He found a dead hedgehog on the path by the Epsom course. Lord Rosebery halted. "I wonder what that means? Had I seen it last Sunday—the Sunday before the Derby (which he had won)—in place of the day after, I *should* have been in a state! You know, one ran across my path at Eton just before I ran my first race. Isn't it strange?"

It is well known that the famous composer Offenbach was believed, on the Continent, to be a *jettatose*, and the people of Etretat believe, to this day, that the handsome villa

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built there is under this diabolical charm. However that may be, it is certain that since Offenbach's death every tenant of the house has met with sudden death or monetary loss. Hence the villa stands empty and is avoided by the townspeople, though it is one of the most desirable marine residences in France.

Pope Pius IX. was also believed to possess the evil eye, and surely the climax of superstitious absurdity seems to be reached when we find that those who attended for the pontifical blessing also took precautions to break the weird spell of his glance!

After the thirteen puzzle, the most common superstition of all is that anent the spilling of salt. Its intricacies are inexplicable. An undoubted authority says—

"Spilling of salt towards a person was formerly considered a very unlucky omen. It was held to indicate that some mischance had already happened to one of the family, or was shortly to befall the person who spilt the salt; and also to denote the rupture of friendship."

Of the superstitious man, Bishop Hall, in his "Character of Virtues and Vices," writes—

"If the salt fall towards him, he looks pale and red, and is not quiet till one of the waiters has poured wine on his lappe."

Poor fellow! In these *fin-de-siècle* days it seems rather hard, and decidedly awkward, that if by accident one spills the salt, a waiter has to be requisitioned to destroy one's dress-clothes.

The spilling of wine, unlike that of salt, is not considered unlucky; and should you chance to upset some, the waiter or your neighbour does not throw salt over you, but sprinkles it upon the table, so that the deductions of the superstitious, if indeed they deduce anything at all, lead to the conclusion that your future happiness is of less importance than the cost of the washing of the tablecloth.

PARNELL.

In "The Rules of Civility," published two centuries ago, I read that "Some are so exact they think it uncivil to help anybody that sits by them, either *with salt* or with *brains*; but in my judgement," the writer continues, "that is but a ridiculous scruple, and if your neighbour desires you to furnish him, you must either take some out with your knife and lay it on his plate, or, if they be more than one, present them with the salt, that they may furnish themselves."

I do not know if this means that one was expected to perform the operation of trepanning upon oneself—taking some of one's own brains out with one's knife and laying them upon one's neighbour's plate. More probably it is in his head that he requires the brains, particularly if he happens to be so idiotic as to believe in rampant superstition. Why on earth it is believed by some people of the present day that the supposed evil consequences of salt-spilling can be averted by flinging some of that commodity over the shoulder, where

POPE PIUS IX.

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perchance it may find its billet in the eye of a servant, is to me a mystery. And why should it be considered unlucky to spill salt, and not so to spill wine? It is this inconsistency that puzzles me.

LORD ROSEBERY AND THE HEDGEHOG.

Should you send a present of a knife to Lord Rosebery, at The Durdans, for him to cut his cabbages with, you are in a worried, nervous state of mind if the noble lord omits to present you with a farthing in return; but despatch the sharpest-edged hatchet to Mr. Chamberlain, at Birmingham, and you are quite happy and satisfied if the sole acknowledgment consists of a sixpenny telegram.

Mr. George R. Sims, the well-known "Dagonet," when invited to the Thirteen Club banquet held on the thirteenth of January, 1894, at which I—an outsider—was flatteringly asked to preside, wrote a letter, which I have already quoted "in another place," but which is well worth introducing into this article, as Mr. Sims is a man of sound common sense, and a great favourite with the larger reading and theatre-going public of Great Britain---

"At the last moment my courage fails me, and I return the dinner-ticket you have so kindly sent me.

"If I had only myself to think of, I would gladly come and defy the Fates, and do all that the members are pleased to do, except wear the green necktie suggested by my friend Mr. Sala (that would not suit my complexion). But I have others to think of—dogs and cats and horses—who, if anything happened to me, would be alone in the world. For their sakes I must not run risks that a faithful carrying out of your programme implies.

"Trusting that nothing very terrible will happen to any of you in after life, believe me," &c.

As a matter of fact, the only unfortunate circumstance attending that dinner befell a member of Mr. Sims' own profession, who declined to walk under a ladder placed across the entrance to the dining-room; in his anxiety to get over the ladder, he fell and was seriously injured.

A superstitious Scot will start in terror at the sight of knives crossed on the table, but thinks nothing of—nay, even dances merrily over—crossed swords on the floor.

Alas, you know the cause too well,
The salt is spilt, to me it fell.
Then to contribute to my loss
My knife and fork were laid across.
On Friday, too, the day I dread,
Would I were safe at home in bed!
Last night (I vow to Heaven 'tis true)
Bounce from the fire a coffin flew—
Next post some fatal news shall tell;
God send my Cornish friends be well!

GEORGE R. SIMS.

I am told that the hard-headed Scotch are rather lovers of the mystical, like their countryman Mr. Lang, than superstitious in the true meaning of the term. Here, however, is a burial story that brings to my

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mind an interesting letter published in the *Times* of November 12, 1889, which is worth recalling to show how superstition prevails in Scotland.

"BURIAL OF MR. ROSE'S BOOTS.

"*To the Editor of the 'Times.'*

"SIR,—Your southern reader would note with surprise the remarkable reticence of the police when examined and cross-examined respecting the non-production of the boots worn by Mr. Rose at the time of his murder. The Highland constable who buried them under water acted in accordance with the ancient tradition that by doing so he would 'lay' the ghost of the murdered man, and thus prevent it from disturbing the people living in the neighbourhood of the catastrophe. It is not unlikely that the officers had a lurking suspicion that they would be laughed at by modern sceptics if they revealed the motive of their apparently strange conduct.—Yours, &c.,

"(Signed) J. B. JOULE.

"Rothesay, N.B.

"November 11, 1889."

If we go back to the ancient Britons, we are told they used hares for their divinations. We have all read, for instance, how Boadicea, the Queen of the Iceni, carried a hare about with her, as an organ-grinder does a monkey. When the Romans appeared, she let the animal jump from its hiding-place in her bosom, and, watched by all the noble Britons, it took to its heels. The direction it took, for some reason or want of reason, they accepted as an indication of the way they should go—not to run, but to fight. In fact, they were all as mad as March hares. There are many silly superstitions about hares. The belief that the right fore-foot of the hare carried constantly in the pocket is a cure for rheumatism—or, rather, a charm against it—is of Chinese origin; for in their mythology, a hare sits in a moon pounding drugs. Pepys, it appears, was superstitious on this point. In his famous Diary is found the following: "Now, I am at a loss to know whether it be my hare's foot which is my preservation, for I never had a fit of collique since I wore it, or whether it be my taking a pull of turpentine every morning."

Indeed, one could fill a volume with the quackery of superstition and curious cures. But I will only mention one—the custom prevalent in the North, not so very long ago, of applying a piece of the wood of a gibbet, upon which a man had been hanged, to the gums, to take away the toothache.

Arab women, like Highland constables, believe in the cold-water cure. If an Arab woman who has lost her husband decides to marry again, she visits the grave of her husband the night before her second marriage and prays him not to be offended. As, however, she feels that he will be offended, she takes with her a donkey laden with two goatskins filled with water. The prayer ended, she proceeds to pour the water on the grave, to keep the first husband cool, in view of what is about to take place, and, having well saturated him, departs.

I came across the following, which shows that even little babies are pressed into the service of superstition, as well as black cats, hares, and other creepy things: In Spain, the infant's face is swept with a pine tree bough to bring good luck. In Ireland, a belt made of woman's hair is placed about the child to keep harm away. Garlic, salt, bread, and steak are put into the cradle of the newborn babe in Holland.

I can understand an Irishman being superstitious about the moon; as, under the names of Re and Lann, it was once worshipped in their country—and, indeed, it still is worshipped in the west. Any silver you may have in your pocket ought to be turned over, "for luck," at the first glimpse of the new moon. In the case of young girls, they must immediately, regardless of missing a train or being late with a message, rush madly off to the nearest stile or gate, and repeat—

> New moon, hail to thee!
> In a dream show to me
> My husband who is to be.

It is not recorded what the superstition is if a donkey should bray at that moment.

Many anti-thirteens will have their hair cut when the new moon appears; if cut at the time of its waning, it is liable to decay and fall off.

Pigs should be killed during the increase of the moon, as the bacon is superior to that killed when the moon is on the wane; and so on *ad lib.*, doubtless "all moonshine."

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TO
THE TUNE OF LITTLE RED HEELS.

By AGNES and EGERTON CASTLE.*

MR. DENIS O'HARA was distracted between ecstasy and despair.

It had so fallen out that the lady of his heart, the object of years of hopeless devotion, Mistress Kitty Bellairs, to wit—daintiest little widow that ever stepped through an obsequious world on high little red heels!—was not to contract, after all, a certain magnificent alliance which would have been the death-blow to his own aspirations.

Furthermore, the circumstances of this breach between the wealthy widow and my lord Earl Mandeville had been such as to place the lady in the odious and unparalleled position of aggrieved party. Not to mince words, the lovely Kitty had been jilted—she, the most notorious little jilt herself! In circumstances such as these, the Irishman (an experienced lover) had said to himself: "There's no knowing." Hence ecstasy!

But alas! what Mr. O'Hara, Lord Kilcroney's heir, knew but too well—what, indeed, demanded no effort of intellect for its realisation—was the vacuous state of his purse and the consequent impossibility of maintaining himself with any sort of credit within the brilliant circle that surrounded the rich widow. Hence despair!

Matters had come to a crisis. He had lost the last of his guineas at the *bouillotte* of my Lady Buckinghamshire's mansion, in a gallant effort to retrieve his fortunes. Mistress Kitty Bellairs's doors were as yet closed to all the world, and her friends were still asked to believe that the little lady was a prey to the *grippe*. But this mood could not last long. Denis became desperate. He withdrew from company, spent the night over figures. He was not at the best of times particularly good at calculations, and the result of his strenuous vigil (a wet towel tied over his red curls to ensure coolness of brain-action, a jug of delicately brewed rack-punch to stimulate activity of thought) was a couple of innocent-looking figures, followed by such a distracting row of noughts as to make him empty the brew at a draught and fan himself with his wet towel.

"The curse of the crows is on it!" said the poor young man, a sorry, haggard spectacle in the grim winter dawn. "There's no making the two ends of the candle meet at all, at all, over here. There's nothing for it but I must all the way to Ireland and see if the old gentleman has left me a few sticks of trees to cut down, and what I can squeeze or coax out of the lawyer boys."

Yes, go he must, and that forthwith. My Lord Verney would gladly lend him a handful of guineas—to go away withal; his landlady would trust him till his return. (Where was there a woman yet that would not trust O'Hara, the handsome ne'er-do-weel? Many a one, in truth, would have been glad to trust him further than he, with his single heart, was like to ask of her.)

On the noon after this tremendous resolution, Denis was ready to start. Verney's gold jingled in his pocket. He had kissed his landlady, left a despairing love-letter at the inexorably barred door of Kitty in dudgeon, and, under the pale blue sky misting into dun city vapours, he mounted a mettlesome chestnut mare—"Red Beauty" yclept—lent from the stables of Mr. Stafford, a wealthy friend, and selected by him as "a good match for his hair!" (Mr. Stafford, like the rest of Mistress Bellairs's little court, perhaps saw no disadvantage in the absence for a while from the town of the winning Mr. O'Hara.) Posting was expensive; coaching in wintry weather and wintry roads was slow—aye, and too dull. Mr. Stafford's friendly loan was opportune.

With light valise strapped on the crupper, with holsters well filled, with a handy hanger on his thigh, instead of the natty smallsword at which he was such an expert, Mr. O'Hara pricked his way down Knightsbridge towards the old Bath Road—bent for Bristol—a

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solitary horseman, yet with none too heavy a heart, in spite of the uncertainty of his venture.

To have young blood in your veins and a singing soul, to feel a piece of good horse-flesh between your knees, to be independent and yet to be in love, to be setting forth on a hazard of risky fortunes and yet to have settled hopes—does a man need more to be happy?

A tolerably well-metalled turnpike road ringing to quick hoofs, a fair country opening out ever new and ever fairer, a glorious frosty sky above, and tart, tingling airs whipping the cheeks, the prospect of a strange inn-room and of unknown company for the night's halt; the arrival in the dark through the spice of lurking danger, the savour of unfamiliar country fare, and the smack of the nutty home-brewed against the palate; the traveller's tale in the ingle-nook by the fire, the drowsy comfort and the deep sleep; the awakening of a morning in a strange bed, and the looking out upon an unknown landscape under a fairy veil of frost: and next day, the start again, a fresh man into a fresh world, with the rested steed spurning the frozen ground with drum of iron! . . . It is a question, after all, whether the little frequent joys of life do not total a better sum of satisfaction than the rare ecstasies which make so great a demand upon our human limitations and leave such void behind.

True, this traveller would heave a heavy sigh ever and anon at the thought of the space and time he was putting, ever lengthening, between himself and his beloved. But the next moment her name would be on his lips with a smile. And, after all, true lover as he was, he bore her with him: a most delicate and roguish dream-Kitty, and a far tenderer (if truth be told) than the same lady in the dainty flesh! For did she not, in his fancy, trot about his room on little red heels, and kiss him "Good night" with a lace kerchief tied over her dark curls? (as once he had seen her at her toilet. Oh, lovely Kitty!).

And did she not ride behind him, through the sparkle and tingle of the morning: an invisible Kitty on an invisible pillion, but with her sweet arms round his neck to keep his heart warm? Aye, and now and then whispered in his ear, to send the song of his soul carolling loud to those silent hedges, so thickly furred with little icicles that not even a robin could pipe there.

The first halt at Hounslow; the next day "at the sign of the Angel," Woolhampton, where, after a mighty fine supper, Mr. O'Hara spent the night appropriately in roaming fields heavenly, with his own particular conception of an angelic being—in little red-heeled slippers, diamond buckled! And he started next day in the highest feather under quite a warm midday sun, for just as far as his own humour and the mettle of friend Stafford's admirable chestnut mare would lead him.

They were now drawing near the high, flat wastes of Cold Ash gorse-fields, not many miles short of Newbury, when a bleak wind began to rise, whistling shrewishly in the rider's ears, and bringing such dull, chill mists up against the sky that all its ruddy sunset promise was lost in threats of snow. The soul of the impressionable Irishman became instantly affected.

"And faith!" said he, turning up the great collar of his *roquelaure* to his ears, and feeling the wind pinch the tip of his boots—"faith and 'tis the devil of a lonely journey to-day! Not the nose of a nag in sight; not the tail of a coach; not even the rim of a highwayman's barker!" As this last thought hopped into his mind to the tune of his trot, a smile twisted his lips. "By my soul, and that's an idea!" said he. "I wonder, now, I haven't taken to the business myself, instead of starting this weary old way to Ireland!"

Once, in a fit of desperation, he had indeed promised Lydia (Mistress Bellairs's own woman, and a person of prodigious importance to all lovers of her mistress) to "go on the road," if necessary, and get her a diamond necklace in recognition of court service! He juggled with the thought for a minute or two, cheating himself out of his sudden sense of depression and loneliness by a vivid series of fancy pictures.

"There does not seem to be a gentleman now left in the profession, if all one hears of the road be true. . . . I flatter myself," thought he, "that I could show them the way to do the thing!"

Tickled by the humorous thought, he gave his hat a truculent cock, loosened one of his pistols in its holster, and looked round upon the leaden waste with the air of the most gallant desperado. The road ran along a high stretch of open grassland and then suddenly dipped, so that the view in front of the traveller was of flat spaces enclosed as in a cup of dull sky. Suddenly—in the very midst of his mental antics—his eye was attracted by the silhouette of a man's hat,

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minute but distinct as if cut out of court plaster, rising upon this near horizon line. Under hat-silhouette followed promptly silhouette of flying cloak, then silhouette of straining horse.

"Company, be jabers!" cried Denis jovially; and, as he and the new-comer drew nearer to each other, he gathered up his reins to make the chestnut strike out with elegance.

"He's come apace," thought the Irishman, "whoever he be. That beast of his is dead beat; the legs are trembling under him. And by me soul! what sort of company is it at all? Bad, I'm thinking."

dismal length of copper-red nose) a scowling anxiety that tried in vain to assume the easy airs of dash and impudence. He lowered up from his pistol to Denis as the latter, with an engaging smile, drew rein within a few yards; then he flung a swift backward look over his shoulder. In both glances there was a background spark of craven fear.

"Oho and oho!" said Denis to himself with a leap of the blood. Then his smiling lip curled. "And did I not say that there was not a gentleman in it? Oh, shade of my gay Duval! Alas, gallant Maclean! what sorry scion of your race is this?

"You ride lonely, sir," began he aloud, addressing the stranger.

"An invisible Kitty, but with her sweet arms round his neck to keep his heart warm."

The stranger indeed bore no very prepossessing appearance; and the occupation in which he was even then engaged as, with reins loose upon its neck, his exhausted and sweat-matted steed toiled up the incline, was not the most reassuring one in the world. With feverishly hurried hands he was, in fact, reloading a long horse-pistol. About his garments there was a flaunting air of shabby smartness; upon his countenance (which was marked for observation by a

"For the matter of that, sir," answered the latter, after a slight pause, balancing the now reloaded pistol in his right hand and gathering the reins in his left as he spoke—"for the matter of that, sir, so do you."

"And you have ridden fast, I mark, sir," pursued O'Hara genially.

"Pray, sir," snarled the other, "may not a man ride fast if he choose?"

As he spoke, his furtive eye shifted from O'Hara's smiling countenance to the points

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of the dancing mare, and thereupon became filled with a sinister, greedy glow. On his side, with bridle hand warily alert, and purposely keeping Red Beauty on the move to frustrate sudden attack, the Irishman pursued with unperturbed amiability—

"Agreed! A gentleman may have his reasons, eh, friend?"

"Reasons? Reasons? Rat me, sir! I have no more reasons than another man. I'll have you know, sir, that I'm none of your fellows with reasons. I will drive any man's teeth down his throat who dares to say I have reasons?"

"Upon my life, a lad of richest humour!" cried O'Hara, addressing the wind. "Indeed, sir," added he then in a more personal manner, "it is evident I did you infinite wrong. Spare my teeth, for I have a pretty smile (or, so the ladies say), and I will make the handsome admission that you have no reason on this road, or off it either."

So very uneasy became the degenerate Duval under Mr. O'Hara's playful banter that it was quite obvious that he hesitated between instant flight or instant attack. Choler, however, had the better of him. An openly threatening gleam appeared in his eye; his long pistol inclined towards an attitude to match. Denis instantly pushed the mare sidling a pace nearer. In proportion to her advance the stranger drew his exhausted horse stumbling obliquely away.

"Ah! that is, no doubt, a remarkable weapon of yours, sir," quoth Lord Kilcroney's heir, in that tone of delicate, taunting irony that was so wasted here. "Must have been used at Blenheim. Old-fashioned, but useful, no doubt. Fie on it, though, for its useless length of nose! A long nose, sir, is a mistake, if you can avoid it—in a pistol, I mean. What would you think now, I wonder, of the build of this pretty one?" And Mr. O'Hara (who had been holding his adversary with a fierce, dilating eye, almost as round as a pistol-rim in its wide-opened lids) here, with a swift and elegant motion of his long right hand, extracted the easy-sitting pistol, and, in his turn, balanced it with as much significance as the bully, but a vast more of elegance.

"Rigby's latest pattern, sir. The creature has a pretty voice. Hark to it clear its throat!" As he spoke, he set the cock, and the click rang sharp and musical. "I can recommend Rigby, of Dublin Town. With a Rigby, sir, a gentleman can have reason on the road."

"Can he? can he, sir? can he?" exclaimed the rider, with a sudden blustering outburst, as uncertain in its aim as the wavering weapon in his hand—"can he? And gentleman, forsooth! I'll have you know by—by—and by—— ! that, gentleman or no gentleman, no one has right or reason on this road when I ride. When I ride, d'ye hear? And that by ancient rules of the High Toby!"

"Rules of the High Toby!" echoed O'Hara, vastly entertained by the sound of the unknown cant. "High Toby, sir? Any connection with little Toby Philpott?" cried he. "Yet, if I take your meaning, a somewhat more dangerous person. An acquaintance like enough to lead on to the Jug! Eh? Rules of High Toby, say you? Will they not bring a man so high that he may end by dancing on air?"

"'Sdeath!" cried the Knight of the Road, and grew grey all but his copper nose. Upon which, to nerve himself, he called upon fury again. But all the time his frightened hare of an eye fluttered from O'Hara's pistol back to the road that dipped into the valley. "The devil is in your flummery!" he yelled. "No gentleman, I say, shall ride on my road, as I'll very soon show you."

He wrenched at his horse's reins, but the wretched creature, in the vain effort to answer his master's call, faltered, floundered, and nearly fell. In the midst of his flying oaths O'Hara noted once again the covetous gaze enveloping his own splendid mount.

"Aha!" cried the alert gentleman to himself. "So 'tis the mare he's after!" And instantly, with a twist of the reins and a spur of the heel, Mr. O'Hara whisked round upon his adversary, flanking out of the line of the pistol just as this latter was, at last, brought to a decided point.

"So that's the game?" he cried, with the exultation that any prospect of conflict never failed to bring him. "A match, brother Turpin, a match! Barker for barker, my Rigby against your Long-nose: I refer, sir, to that interesting heirloom of good Queen Anne's days, your pistol."

But the aggrieved highwayman, apparently, was not used to take professional work in so light-hearted a manner; the intruder's airy agility of wit disconcerted him even more than his steadiness of hand and the nimbleness of his equitation. Again he hesitated, again flung a darkling look upon the coveted steed. Then, to O'Hara's mingled disappointment and amusement, muttering between his teeth a handsomely larded phrase to the effect of his having no time to

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waste on fools—fairly turned tail and set off along the grey road at the best of his sorry nag's speed. And ever and anon the backward look!

It was this backward look that kept Denis from pricking in pursuit.

"Why, the creature's no more liver on him than a white rabbit!" cried he dolefully as he watched him out of sight.

* * * * *

Nevertheless, for all its disappointing issue, this little encounter had pleasantly enlivened Mr. O'Hara. He started down the hill at a brisk trot.

"I smell snow," said he, and thought of the "Pelican" a few miles ahead—a hostelry he was well acquainted with—of a ruddy fire and a steaming brew.

Upon the lower level he passed once more into the land of hedges and fields; rode under the shade of Dunstan Park woods, naked, yet sheltering. There, upon ground where the frost had not lain, and where the stepping was softer, between ditches full of sodden, pungent leaves, the mare broke into a joyous canter to the tune of a fresh dance of little red heels in the rider's heart.

And thus cantering, they came at the turn of the road upon a high, yellow chaise, that travelled in the direction of Newbury at a melancholy and uncertain rate. O'Hara would have sped past without bestowing more than a glance upon it but for the sounds of wrangling which rose loud into the wintry silence—wrangling in the midst of which something familiar, in a pipy voice and an affected, mincing speech, seemed to strike his ear. He wheeled Red Beauty suddenly round. A surly-looking postboy, with eyes well-nigh as furtive as those of his recent road acquaintance, pulled the horses to a standstill.

"By my noble father's thirst, whom have we here?" cried O'Hara.

The clamour in the chaise was succeeded by a hush. Then, "Gracious!" rose a voice, quavering in terror, "is this another of them?" Upon which, the shrill accents which O'Hara seemed to have recognised cut in, acid: "Get out your pistals, paltroon. A carse on my good nature—that I should have ever have cansarted with a City dag! Rat you, you must do the fighting this time!"

"Spicer! as I live! 'Tis Spicer!" exclaimed Lord Kilcroney's heir, with a great burst of laughter. Through the window a long, lean, deathlike face was now gingerly protruded. At sight of the rider it broke into a sickly smile.

"Tare and 'ouns, man!" Mr. O'Hara called out, "what's up with you? You look like a fresh-made corpse! 'Tisn't considerate to suggest a wake when there's not a bottle within miles."

"I've been wounded, Mr. O'Hara," responded the gentleman with dignity. "Stapped in broad daylight, too, set upon, rabbed, wounded——" He raised his right arm, bound with a blood-stained napkin, nursing it upon his left hand for O'Hara's inspection. But if he expected sympathy, he was disappointed. O'Hara gave a long whistle. This explained the reloading performance of Copper-nose! A calf-like bleat of terror from within the chaise brought him back to the present circumstances.

"Come, Spicer," quoth he, "let us see what you've got in there. Something young and tender and green, as usual, I'll warrant! A gosling with some lard on him, I'll stake my life, or you would not be his bear-leader! Come, young sir!" knocking jovially with the butt of his whip on the taut leather of the hood. "Show yourself! Your money is safe from me."

"Money!" responded the bleat pitifully, while its owner displayed at the same time a pale, silly, flabby visage of remarkable immaturity.

"Money, sir!" echoed Spicer, again thrusting himself into prominence. "Did I nat tell you, man, that I have been rabbed? Rabbed of near everything, sir. We have been fallowed, 'tis my belief, all the way from Hounslow. This fool would prate of our gold from inn to inn——"

"Now," thought O'Hara, "the story unfolds. Now is made plain the reason of friend Copper-nose's foundered nag! A stern chase is a long chase, as your privateersman has it."

Meanwhile—"Our money! 'Twas my money!" the poor calf was whimpering. "Three hundred guineas—Aunt Matilda's legacy—all gone, all gone!"

Now, the devil would have it that Mr. O'Hara must always see the joke of the situation. No sooner had this moving tale fallen upon his ear than he set up such a laugh that the very crows at the top of Dunstan trees took wing with scandalised cawing.

That Captain Spicer, the ingenious gentleman whose main business in life was to teach the rich greenhorn the ways (and byways) of the fashionable world—a business requiring

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"He glanced at the surly postboy. Then thought of the long-nosed man and his frightened eye."

much delicacy of handling, but, in a general way, very lucrative indeed—that Captain Spicer should thus have the fruit of probably many days' diplomacy whisked away from under his nose, without (as the Irishman phrased it to himself) as much as a bite! The story was rich!

"'Pon my soul, Spicer," quoth he, "I'm sorry for you!"

He glanced at the surly postboy. Then again thought of the long-nosed man and his frightened eye—and laughed again, this time scornfully.

"Scarce the crow of a mouse between the two of them . . . and a confederate to drive the pair and send notice! Ha, Copper-nose had a long race for his three hundred guineas! No wonder he longed for my Red Beauty. Three hundred guineas, and but a dead lame nag to scuttle away with them—not five miles in the poor beast left, poor Copper-nose!"

"Little thought I," cried the led captain, with fresh acrimony, "when I cansented to give the creature—this Haggins, old Haggins, the silversmith's nephew, pah!—the benefit of my campany and countenance at Bath, that I had to deal with a coward—yes, Mr. Haggins, a coward, that is what I said."

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"Zounds!" cried the goaded Huggins. "You screeched out that you were murdered, Captain Spicer, sir! And, if you please, the scoundrel's pistol was at my head, sir!"

"Whereupan, sir," said Spicer, sneering hideously, "you handed him your sealskin bag, as palitely, sir, as if you were handing a snaff-bax, sir, aver your father's counter, sir. But it serves me right, for candescending to the City——"

"And why, Spicer, why? What would you expect of a City gentleman but counter courage?" cried O'Hara in the highest humour. "Mr. Huggins, 'tis evident, has been brought up to regard life from the safe side."

He had perforce to supply himself the applause to his own quip, for neither of the combatants would see the point.

"And for the matter of that, Captain Spicer," retorted the calf, between tears and fury, "if you'd shot a little straighter yourself, sir, I should not be now——"

"'Tis all the gratitude I get, you see, O'Hara. Wounded, grievously wounded, and talked to, zounds! talked to by this fallow! A serious wound, O'Hara—nay, two wounds; for, hang me if the rascal's ball did not go in at one side of my arm, and out at the ather!"

"Went out, did it, now? And prodigious obliging of it!" cried the cheerful rider. "'Twill save the surgeon's fee."

"Three hundred guineas!" ejaculated Mr. Huggins again, with a sudden yelp, as if the memory of his wrongs had been driven into him with a bradawl.

"Three hundred guineas!" A second or two Mr. O'Hara sat stock still in his saddle, staring across the chaise towards the fields beyond. A few feathery white flakes came undulating downwards from the leaden sky: here in this valley road there was shelter from the wind, and the flakes fell fantastic slow. His brow was drawn with deep thought. Presently a slow smile overspread his countenance.

Within the chaise the pair were once more at their bickers. Upon his patient horse the postboy with the uneasy eye sat motionless, the image of sullen waiting.

"Zounds, man!" the Captain was saying, "will you never have dan? And by the way," exclaimed he with sudden snarl, "rat me if I know what we are loitering here for. Carse that postboy! Drive on, rascal, will you!"

Denis awoke from his abstraction with a start. "Farewell, then, my lively lads," quoth he, "for here our ways diverge."

And then it was instructive to hear the gallant captain bestow as many curses on the postboy for starting as the instant before for standing still. "Split him! Rat him! Did he not see that he was speaking to the gentleman?

"Oh, Denis!" next quoth he in piteousness, "you are not going to leave us?"

"Why, tare and ages!" cried the Irishman in contempt, "(and Denis me no Denises, if you please, Captain Spicer!) do you think you will be stopped for your beauty next? Why, there is your postboy will answer to any gentleman of the road that you're not worth the stopping—eh, friend?" He reached the lad a smart tap on the shoulder with his riding-whip, whereat that individual let fly between his horse's ears a growling asseveration as to his utter ignorance of what the gentleman could mean, but refrained from allowing the candour of his visage to be scanned.

"Four lonely miles," groaned Spicer, "and I a wounded man!"

"Why, what is that but two apiece—not to speak of the boy and the horses?" cried O'Hara, with his pitiless laugh. "Sorry, my noble captain, but I have business in this neighbourhood."

He took off his hat with a splendid flourish, wheeled the chestnut abruptly round up a by-lane, and was off at so brisk a pace that before the dismal travellers in the chaise could utter another protest he was out of their sight.

"Unless I am much mistaken," reflected the ingenious gentleman, "this path must lead round the park to the turnpike again."

And, truly, out on the turnpike again he came, before the fast falling shades of the winter night had gathered to much more perceptible density.

"And now, Red Beauty, my dainty one," cried he to his mare, as he shook the reins, and the mettled beast responded instantly by breaking into her long, easy canter, "'tis a race for love, when all's said and done. And as good a joke, aha! as ever was heard, into the bargain! Bravo, my lady! Never a touch of the spur shall your side get from me. Why, begorrah! 'tis the born hunter you are. Give me the red-haired ones! No wonder Copper-nose wanted you."

* * * * *

Having breasted the long ascent from the valley in easy sprints—for, keen as he

was upon his quarry, O'Hara was too true a sportsman to press a willing steed—they reached again those bleak wastes appropriately dubbed Cold Ash, and then, with the wind at their back, let fly through the driving dusk at topmost speed. Here blew a whistling wind that scarce permitted a snowflake to fall, while the laden clouds hung ever closer and more lowering above the darkening land.

It was that dim and deceitful hour—"'twixt dog and wolf," as the French have it—when shadows and objects are intermingled and outlines lost. Still the road stretched straight, a paler grey amid the deeper. And if, once or twice, the chestnut shied, it was but when some distorted, wind-nipped, ragged tree seemed to leap black at her out of the world of shadows. Denis found the situation to his taste: the contrast between his whipped-up blood and the dead-cold approach of night, between the desolation of the scene and his own luminous fancies. The rapid motion, of itself an exhilaration. And over all was a sense of personal danger, which was always the finest spice of life to him.

"But another mile or so," he reckoned, "my beauty, and you and I will have a few more words to say to this High Toby gentleman and his sorry nag."

The chuckle was yet on his lips when the swinging pace beneath him was violently checked; and the next instant the chestnut, snorting in fury and fear, was rearing from the indignity of a brutal grasp on her bridle. Denis had scarce time to realise that the way was blocked by some just distinguishable bulky mass—a dead horse: it seemed to be just across the road—and that a man had sprung at his mare's head, before a husky shout commanded him to dismount.

"Begorrah!" cried he, "and is it on the top of you I am, then, before I'd time to overtake you?"

No sooner had the mocking Irish voice fallen upon the air than, with a cursing "Oh! it's you, is it?" the man gave another furious tug at the bridle and at the same moment fired. A hot streak of flame passed, singing, close above O'Hara's ear. Instantly, with the joyous alacrity of the born fighter, his every instinct leaped to the emergency. By the broad yellow flash he had seen, painted as it were upon the black canvas of the night, a vision of an evil, haggard countenance, of a long, red nose.

"Now we know where we are! Steady!" quoth he, and bent over on the side of his assailant. "Aha, friend!" he cried with loud exultation, and darted out a quick long arm. Before the pistol had time to fall from the pointing, he had seized it by its smoking barrel and wrenched it away. "Did I not tell thee that long noses were a mistake?" he cried, as he struck.

The heavy butt caught the highwayman between the eyes. There was heard the thud of his fall upon the road, and the kind of snuffling sob that accompanied it.

Red Beauty, now released, made a very pretty display of outraged feeling, which O'Hara, understanding equine nature, had, however, little trouble in calming. He was soon able to dismount.

"Troth!" said he, fondling her neck, "'tis the way of your sex to carry a man gaily into danger, and 'tis the way of ours to love you the more. It's yourself that the rogue coveted, my Red Beauty," said he; "but you were never foaled to carry such scum as that."

The intelligent creature thrust her head towards him in the dark and lipped his cheek with velvet touch.

"Yes, yes," answered he, "that was a lucky shy of yours!" He ran his hand across his ear; and, where he was wont to meet the crisp bunch of curls *à la brigadière*, met a deplorable flatness. "A close shave, by thunder! What will Kitty think of this? Well, better a curl than a life. You saved us both, I'm thinking," he went on, again flattering the mare's neck. "Indeed, colleen, it's borne in upon me that we were made for each other. And if that sealskin bag but has half what Spicer reckoned on, why, then, you and I shall not part."

He slung the reins over his arms. Red Beauty was now all tranquil condescension. If truth were told, perhaps, she had the curiosity of her sex, and was quite aware that something interesting was afoot.

Mr. O'Hara advanced cautiously towards the smaller of the indistinct black heaps, that still showed vaguely upon the pale roadway in spite of the ever-deepening night. He knelt down and passed his hand over the prostrate figure.

Not dead! Well, that was a relief. Denis was of those who think little enough of life or death, for himself or for others; but there was not in him the stuff of the executioner.

"He'll live to be hanged yet," said he to himself. Certainly not dead. And, indeed, if sundry jerks and heaving breaths beneath his touch, sundry grunts that met his ears, be taken as indications, Copper-nose was

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rapidly nearing consciousness again. "But 'twere well 'twere done quickly,' as little Davy Garrick says in the play," muttered Denis. And running the reins up to his shoulder, he now brought both hands to his task. "What's this, now? The fellow of the barker that snapped at me, in the belt! There now, friend, that will give you more room to breathe. And I'm thinking, anyhow, it's as well in safe keeping," he murmured, slipping the man's remaining pistol into his own belt. "'Pon my soul! little did I ever think I'd come to take a purse, and off a highwayman, too. Aha! What have we here? The sealskin bag, as I live! Easy, now, brother; don't be groaning that way. It's not a ha'porth of harm I'm doing you but relieving your conscience. Faith, I've as good a right to it as you, this night, and a deal better than Spicer any night of the year!"

His fingers were, indeed, in contact with a smooth, furry surface, under which rose a succession of hard little cylinders. This set his hand trembling.

"The little gold boys—or may I never fight again!"

The bag was strapped to the man's waist, and to get at it required some manipulation. Master Copper-nose, moreover, presently began to struggle; and O'Hara, who up to this moment had been perhaps a little half-hearted about the rifling business, now become exhilarated to interest, and set to work *con amore*. Hampered as he was by Red Beauty's reins, it was after a pretty severe wrestling match that he succeeded in drawing his hanger, cutting the recalcitrant straps, and possessing himself triumphantly of the weighty sealskin bag. The highwayman gave a despairing howl as he suddenly realised that the fruit of his long day's work was finally reft from him. He made a wild clutch at his rival when the latter rose to his feet; but his fingers, in the dark, struck against cold steel.

"Give it up, man!" came those laughing tones that from the very first had filled him with hatred and yet superstitious fear. "Give it up, brother of the High Toby, unless you've got another pair of heirlooms to match your nose."

The man had staggered up. Nothing but shadows were they now to each other in the universal blackness; but each could hear the other's breathing: O'Hara's caught with exultant laughter, the highwayman's stertorous with impotent fury. To emphasise his remarks, then, Denis playfully drew the captured pistol from his belt and clicked the lock meaningly. And upon this there was a crash as of some wild animal plunging into cover, a stumbling rush of feet, sounds of flight, quickly carried away in the wings of the wind.

As O'Hara stood listening, the blast fled by him over the hill and left a deep interlude of silence in which he could catch no sound but Red Beauty's soft, inquisitive breathing at his elbow. He sent a loud laugh after the retreating knight, then he weighed the bag in his hands.

"Three hundred guineas, they said! I'd have been lucky if I'd got the half of it in the Old Country! That's back to Kitty! She will have had time to miss me, not time to replace me!" cried Denis O'Hara.

But now, being a man of money, a man of worth, Mr. O'Hara became mighty cautious. The first thing to be done was to distribute the rouleaux among all his pockets and cast the now limp recipient into the adjacent ditch. The next was to decide upon his own movements. Restraining, though not without a sigh, his natural inclination, which was Londonwards, he turned Red Beauty's head towards Speenhamland, near Newbury, the nearest halt, and was for mounting once more, when he paused.

"There's the poor comrade yonder," quoth he, "whom we must not leave in extremity, if he's not past help. We owe him that, colleen." And leading the mare, he retraced his steps once more. Red Beauty craned her neck and drew deeper breaths of sympathy over the body of her fallen brother.

"Aye," said O'Hara, after a second's examination, "stone dead. His heart's broke, my colleen, and well for it. And if I've left my mark on Copper-nose, 'tis no more than he deserves."

But it was high time that Denis O'Hara should place himself, his borrowed steed, and captured wealth under shelter. The snowstorm was gathering, the winds on these high, bleak lands came charged with stinging flakes.

"We'll take it steady, but easy and cautious, love," said he, once more swinging himself into the saddle.

* * * * *

At the door of

> The famous inn in Speenhamland
> That stands below the hill,
> And rightly called "The Pelican,"
> From its enormous bill

(as a wit of the period sang of that excellent house of entertainment), came a red-haired

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traveller upon a red-coated mare, both somewhat the worse for a difficult journey in the dark through a settled snowstorm.

Perished though he was, O'Hara, whose soft heart had ached over the fate of the highwayman's steed, would be content to-night to let no one see to his mare except himself. Having, therefore, seen her rubbed down to his own satisfaction, seen her at last stand in the best stall up to her belly in golden straw; having coaxed her to her feed with a warm mash, and satisfied himself that the capricious lady had really a good appetite in spite of some coquetting, he passed into the hostelry.

Here he was not an unknown guest. The length of the "Pelican's" bill was no deterrent to him; when he had a guinea, he spent it with the delightful ease of the impecunious, where another would haggle over a shilling. Thus it was with the familiarity of the intimate that, cocking his hat so as to conceal the loss of the curl, upon which he desired no question, he marched straight from the stable into the kitchen, where he knew he would find a roaring sea-coal fire, for the comforting of the chilled and sodden outer man, and would furthermore be able to choose on the spot the particular refreshment that seemed best suited for the cheering of the inner.

Now, the first object that met his airy glance, as he advanced into the rosy circle flung out by the great hearth, was the dubious postboy of the yellow chaise, shovelling rabbit-pie into his own anatomy with as much gusto as the most honest of Britons. The next instant, he beheld, seated in an attitude of utmost dejection, supporting an elaborately curled wig upon a limp fist, no less interesting a person than the whilom owner of the guinea rolls. So unexpected was the encounter, Newbury having been the declared destination of the yellow chaise, that for the moment it had the remarkable effect of depriving Mr. O'Hara of speech.

Suddenly, however, interrupting mine host upon the eulogy of spiced veal, and woodcock on toast to follow, he strode up to the table and tapped it with his riding-whip in front of Spicer's disconsolate, plucked, and now useless, pigeon.

"Have we not met before, sir?"

Mr. Huggins looked up with a dismal, unillumined eye, and evidently failed to recognise the speaker. The postboy became more absorbed than ever in his supper.

"Surely," went on Mr. O'Hara, "you are the traveller whom I encountered this afternoon. Some little misadventure, I understand, had just befallen you."

"Little misadventure! Aye, sir, I had just been robbed—all I had!" said the poor youth, with dull, unconscious irony.

The landlord had followed O'Hara's move with some curiosity.

"I've offered the young man to make him a present of supper and bed," he here observed in tones of important philanthropy, "but he declines to partake."

Mr. O'Hara wheeled round upon him with some sternness. A man is never more disposed to rebuke his neighbour as when his own conscience is slightly uncomfortable.

"And pray, Mr. Landlord, how comes it that you have stationed this young gentleman in the kitchen with his own postboy?"

The landlord entered into a prodigious state of surprise and discomfiture. He plumed himself—indeed, with some truth—on having an instinct for a gentleman; and knew that brocade and lace did not suffice to the making of one. He stammered a hasty apology, turning from the disconsolate youth in his rich city garb to the mud-spattered, plain-coated Irishman, whose genial, clean-cut face was just now as haughty as ever any English peer's could be. He had not known. It was a strange story. It was very clear the young gentleman (Mr. Huggins was promoted!) could not pay shot. And Captain Spicer (who had gone to bed in the best room upstairs, with every attention for his wound) - Captain Spicer, whom probably Mr. O'Hara knew, had warned the landlord that he disclaimed all pecuniary responsibility.

"Captain Spicer!" ejaculated O'Hara, with such a twist of contempt on his lips that mine host of the "Pelican" perceived that he was here on the wrong track, and quickly abandoned it. "If he had known that the Honourable Mr. O'Hara, son of that well-known and admirable nobleman my Lord Kilcroney, took an interest——"

Again O'Hara cut him short. With an impatient wave of his hand, "That'll do!" cried he. "Had you known Mr. Huggins's consequence, you'd have stripped your breast bare for him—would you not, you old Pelican, you?"

Mr. Huggins, on his side, hearing of the consequence of his interpellator, was no whit less obsequiously moved than his grudging host.

"The Honourable Mr. O'Hara!" quoth he, rising to his feet and making a series of city legs. "I am honoured, sir, vastly honoured." Then, with a return of his first

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bleat: "Your friend, sir, Captain Spicer, has abandoned me."

Thereupon ensued a rambling statement in which the tedium of a silversmith's life, the relief of Aunt Matilda's legacy, were intermingled with lamentations upon the hard fate that had overtaken him; the prospect of an immediate return to desk and grind.

"He made a wild clutch at his rival."

O'Hara stood gazing at him in his unwontedly cogitative mood. "Sure," he was thinking. "it would be doing an owl of that kidney no good turn to give him back the money. What would the green-goose do with it but make an ass of himself—and him that already?"

Aloud he bade the landlord serve up supper for two in the parlour; and then, informing Mr. Huggins that he would expect him in a quarter of an hour, turned away abruptly to avoid the gratitude that overcame the young cit.

* * *

A genial meal loosens the tongues of even uncongenial companions; and Mr. O'Hara was not of the kind to make any guest of his feel the inferiority of his social station. Nevertheless, had the postboy been but a more lively sort of rascal, the Irishman would have preferred even his society to that of the little vulgar, pasty-faced clerk.

After a bumper or two, a kind of sparkle had come to the latter's watery eye; and, freed from his first hampering assumption of fine manners, he began to let his tongue wag with all its native impudence and folly. Between the

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picking of the last woodcock bone and the cracking of the first walnut, Mr. O'Hara was made the recipient of his innermost confidences.

"Young Calico's a rip, begorrah! of the first water—first gutter water! The cock of the tavern, the buck of Cheapside wenches!" Upon this summary of his guest, Mr. O'Hara—a silk handkerchief tied over his mutilated curl—leant back in his chair and surveyed him through half-closed lids with something of pity mixed with his contempt.

"And by goles!" Mr. Huggins was saying, as he reached unceremoniously for the bottle, "I can give you as good a song, though I say it, as any lad of ours among the 'Harmonious Owls.'"

"Harmonious Owls?" inquired O'Hara, tickled as was his wont by any picturesque combination of words.

"Aye, my boy!—honourable sir, I mean—'tis our club in Little Britain. A set of fellows—oh! they could show you a bit of life! We meet o' Saturday nights. Aye, and there's the 'Bleeding Cross-Bones,' down Knightrider Lane. That is a club! There's play at 'the Bones,' sir, I tell you," said Mr. Huggins, leaning forward and speaking in a husky whisper. "I won nine guineas there one night. At single sitting, sir."

"Thunder and turf! say you so?"

"I could give you a bit of a new song that took them mightily among the Howls—the Owls, I should say."

Mr. O'Hara sat quickly up in his chair and flung out a forbidding hand, as Mr. Huggins uplifted a dismal voice and carolled—

"Oh, where is the harm of a little kiss—
One, one, only one?
And what can the heart——"

"Peace!" cried the Irishman with loud authority, slapping the table with his open hand. And as the other stared, open-mouthed, round-eyed: "'Tis my infirmity, sir," proceeded Denis more civilly. "Music, somehow, turns my wine sour on me. It comes, Mr. Huggins, doubtless from an error in my upbringing; my head was not made early enough. I'm obliged to concentrate, sir, to give my attention to the bottle."

While gravely dealing out this farrago, which had the desired effect of completely nonplussing the young man, Mr. O'Hara's wits were busy upon a little scheme suggested by a chance boast of his companion. One might, after all, get an hour or two of entertainment out of the back-street buck, if 'twere true he was such a ruffler at the dice and the cards. "And if this jot-down-nought-and-carry-one has, as he says, swept the mighty sum of nine guineas from his fellow 'prentices, he's as good a chance of winning his three hundred from me!"

There was a quaintness about the idea that pleased Mr. O'Hara hugely. And, indeed, he would not have been O'Hara had not the temptation of putting all his fortunes to the hazard again been irresistible.

"Upon my soul!" he exclaimed suddenly, "but you're a young gentleman of prodigious accomplishment! And what, Mr. Huggins, may I inquire, is your favourite game?"

"Why," cried the clerk, "I am reckoned, sir, dangerous at piquet. And there are many, sir, who had rather be my partner at whist. But when the humour is on me to play high," said Master Huggins, tossing down the end of his glass with a knowing turn of wrist, "then nothing, to my mind, comes up to faro; though basset, indeed, and ombre, and lanterloo, and quinze are reckoned fair games, and also lansquenet, quadrille, and——"

"Nay," said O'Hara, breaking the chain, "I am with you. Faro is a pretty game—between gentlemen. Faro's the game! What say you to a deal or two?"

"By goles!" cried the clerk, and a greedy joy spread over his countenance, "but you're a gentleman after my own heart!" Then he suddenly clapped his hands against his pockets, and his jaw dropped. "Ud's bones! I was forgetting! Cleaned out! Unless you will throw with me for my buttons—silver, on my honour, and a pretty fancy——"

"Oh, pooh, Mr. Huggins!" cried O'Hara, "between gentlemen! Sir, your misadventure might have occurred to anyone—to anyone of your constitutional modesty. You've learned that 'tis a mistake to be at all backward in coming forward when the call is pistols, that's all! I shall be charmed to oblige you, sir, by the loan of a few guineas. The note of hand of so well known a person as yourself is as good as the Bank, I've no doubt. Shall it be, to begin with, a trifle of ten?"

"Oh, make it a guinea, sir," said the dashing cit in superior tones.

"Now, here's a lad of spirit!" cried O'Hara, breaking into loud laughter. "By my father's last bottle, sir! I like your humour!"

He swept a clear space on the table as he spoke, and spread thereupon, in shining array,

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"She actually ran to meet her faithful adorer."

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ten of Verney's golden coins. "I'm a bad arithmetician," he went on; "I've not had your education, and it comes easier to me to reckon in pieces. Will you hold the bank, or shall I?"

* * * * *

Gog and Magog! How their bold 'prentice son kept up the credit of City valour and pledged his own that winter night, at the "Pelican," Speenham, on the Bath road! At first, indeed, he won; and all that were left of my Lord Verney's thirty guineas found themselves heaped in a pile by the side of his glass. And Mr. O'Hara (enjoying himself colossally) began to see the moment when he would have surreptitiously to break one of those rouleaux that lay so snug in his pockets.

But it seemed fated that Aunt Matilda's legacy was not to benefit her gay young dog of a nephew; for, from the moment when it was likely to come once more into action, the luck turned. And first my Lord Verney's guineas found their way back to Mr. O'Hara's side of the table. Then a bundle of I.O.U.'s began to grow beneath that gentleman's elbow—the earlier ones neatly engrossed in Mr. Huggins's most clerkly hand, those succeeding growing wilder and wilder as that gentleman's spirits approached desperation. They called for more wine; they called for fresh candles. Rouleau by rouleau, the travelled gold passed *de jure* into the pockets where it already reposed *de facto*.

"Your luck's bitter bad, my young friend. Have you ever tried, at the 'Bleeding Bones,' what the turning of your coat will do for you? 'Tis a practice you may on occasion see at White's."

It took the muddled wits of the city-bred youth a full minute to grasp the purport of this advice. When, however, he had done so, he carried it out with such tipsy precipitation, and the figure he cut when the change was at last effected and he sat down once more, clad in the bright red lining, that Mr. O'Hara fell into inextinguishable laughter.

"If that does not propitiate the Fates——!" said he. "Why, 'tis a little Lord Mayor you're destined to be, and no mistake!"

"*Paroly!* I'll go *paroly!*" cried the future Lord Mayor in a thick voice, falling once more upon his cards with a froglike plunge.

"Devil mend you!" muttered O'Hara to himself. "You'd go St. Paul's and the Bank of England on the value of a lock of your hair! Here has the green calf lost his Aunt Matilda's legacy twice, and he'll double or quits me with never a stiver to stake! But, by the living Jingo! I'll do it—and win my chances with Kitty for the third time! 'There's luck in odd numbers, says Rory O'Moore!'" And aloud: "Done with you, my gay punter!"

The cards were shuffled and again dealt upon the table. And then Mr. Huggins gazed, horror-struck.

Then, in the silence, Mr. O'Hara poured himself the last glass and tossed it down. For a "head that had not been made early," his had a wonderful capacity for remaining on the intelligent side of exhilaration through a very mighty potation. But then (as he would explain to the neophyte) "you can get through a deal of claret with the help of a bottle of port." And he was always careful to top up with the more generous fellow.

"God bless you, Kitty!" said he in his soul, with a deep sigh of satisfaction as the final mellow drop ran down his throat. "I shall have a sight of your pretty face the day after to-morrow."

"And now, sir," he asked, "how do we stand with regard to each other?"

Mr. Huggins started from his sodden trance of horror. The words had fallen upon him like buckets of cold water. The I.O.U.'s lay spread out in eloquent array. There was a rapid, merciless little calculation.

"I take it, sir," said O'Hara, dropping his pencil, "that you owe me some six hundred guineas. Or will you kindly verify!"

Verify! The clerk flung out his arms upon the table, dropped his head over them, and gave vent to a bellow of utter misery. Six hundred guineas! With the three hundred of which he had been robbed, nine hundred! What a sum for a City youth, worth at highest calculation some fifty shillings a week! He had the vaguest notions of the manner in which such a debt might be enforced in the high circles to which his opponent belonged—whether by prison, or, yet more awful contingency, by pistols!

Mr. O'Hara rose from his seat and walked over to the fireplace. From that point of vantage, warming his coat-tails, he gazed philosophically, though not unbenevolently, upon the prostrate and howling youth.

"Begorrah! the poor little cur! 'tis the voice of a bullock he's got!"

After a moment or two he approached the table once more and tapped the young

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gambler sharply on the shoulder. Then, without a word, gathering together the valuable autographs, held them up solemnly before the youth's staring eyes; and then, still in silence, but with a certain air of ceremony, crushed them into a tight ball, which he finally flung into the fire.

The clerk sprang to his feet, uncertain, trembling, scarcely daring to interpret the action to his own relief, so unspeakable did that relief appear. Upon this Mr. O'Hara spoke in the most mellifluous yet doctoral accents that it is possible to conceive.

"Let this be a lesson to you, young man. For the future be content with the humble lot which Providence has marked as your own. Devote yourself to the low virtues of your state in life, and refrain from endeavouring to improve yourself by imitating the high vices of your betters. Another than myself, Mr. Huggins, be assured of it, would not have——" He paused impressively and waved his hand towards the fire.

The little cit—no very attractive spectacle in his turned coat, with his pale, puffy, red-eyed face—here fairly broke down and burst into tears. But they were tears of the grateful and the shamed. O'Hara stalked over to the table with a magisterial gait which admirably concealed a slight tendency to waver, collected his loose gold into a pile, then, slipping the greater part into his pocket, slammed down in front of the ever more bewildered youth five ringing golden pieces.

"There, young man!" quoth he, "take these, and also take the coach to-morrow back to London. Eat humble-pie when you get there. And for the future, sir, beware of wine and the company of your superiors, of fashionable captains, and the Bath road. Reserve yourself for the Harmonious Bones and the ale tankards. Not a word, sir!"

Upon which he pointed to the door with so decided a gesture that, not unlike the cur to which he had been compared, the would-be Macaroni crawled away without either the wit or the courage to utter another word.

Had he been able to see through the solid wood, after he had drawn it between himself and his singular entertainer, Mr. Huggins probably would have been more puzzled than ever. For Denis O'Hara, propped against the table, was swinging from side to side, a prey to paroxysms of laughter. O'Hara, moralist! Delicious pleasantry!

* * * * *

It was, after all, not before the sunset of the second day that Mr. O'Hara, on Red Beauty, rode into the rumour, the stir and smoke of Town, from the still, lonely, clean-breathing country road.

With his temporary sense of wealth there had come over him a temporary sense of caution. The going was bad after the snow; it was not in him to push the dear, faithful mare; and he was determined, moreover, to risk no encounter that might jeopardise his renewed hopes. It was late, therefore, before (in a toilet of sufficient elegance and with his hair recoiffed *à la Catojan* to hide the loss of his curl) he found himself once again between the two link-extinguishers of Kitty Bellairs's house in Charles Street.

A sedan was waiting outside; there were lights within. He was emboldened to knock, and, to his bliss, was admitted, though upon conditions. "Mistress Bellairs was this very moment about to leave for Lady Wharton's rout," said the footman; "he would inquire whether she would receive."

"Nay," said Denis, his heart beating thick, and slipped one of his hard-won guineas into the ready hand, "do not announce me, friend; I will see for myself."

He sprang up the stairs four at a time and then paused without the lavender parlour. And there he stood, the silly fellow, breathing short, trembling, before he could summon self-control enough to knock at the white-and-gold panel.

"Gracious sakes!" cried Kitty's treble within.

"'Tis I, darling—Kitty, darling, 'tis I!" cried the most ridiculous, hoarse voice in all the world.

"Who?" came the query, crystal-clear and silver-sharp within. (Bellairs Incomparable was musical even in querulousness; delicious in all her butterfly moods.)

"I really believe, ma'am," came Lydia the tirewoman's vibrant tone, with a bold giggle, "that 'tis Mr. O'Hara back again, if you please!"

And, "O'Hara!" echoed the lady within. And surely, surely, there was a ring of joy in the cry!

And O'Hara, opening the door, heard the song of her silken skirt, the patter of her little red heels, as, surprised into unwary graciousness, she actually ran to meet her faithful adorer—those saucy little red heels that had been sweetly dancing through his thoughts these five long days!

"Mercy!" cried the lady, "what have you done with your hair?"

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MADAME PATTI'S ADVICE TO SINGERS:

HER OWN RULES FOR PRESERVING THE VOICE.

Dictated by Madame Patti to William Armstrong, and revised by her for publication.

PEOPLE who cultivate the voice have widely different ideas on what constitutes the best method of its preservation. If I gave lessons, I should cultivate the middle notes, and the voice of the singer would be good at the age of a hundred. The whole harm to a voice comes in pushing it up and down, in trying to add extra notes to its compass.

"How high can you sing?" appears to be the question. But what about the foundation part of the voice—that is, the middle notes? My success is founded on those notes, and there can be no enduring success without them. How many can sing very high and yet cannot sing "Home, Sweet Home"! Some pooh-pooh the idea of the difficulty of that simple melody. But it is more difficult to sing "Home, Sweet Home" than the waltz song from "Romeo and Juliet," because of its demands upon the development of the voice. Without the beautiful middle notes there is no cantabile, and upon the proper development of these and the avoidance of strain by forcing high and low notes the enduring powers of the singer depend.

High gymnastics are very beautiful; but lose the middle notes, and you lose all. The very high and the very low notes are the ornaments, but what good are Gobelins and pictures if you have no house to hang them in?

The tremolo, one of the most objectionable and unbearable of vocal faults, is but a phase of this forcing, and comes of the spreading of the vocal cords through straining.

How often the question has been put to me: "Madame Patti, how high can you sing?" and I have thought: "Are you at it, too?" The middle voice is the one that you need to sing with. I sing comfortably.

If you want to sing for years, do not strain the natural compass of the voice. That is like living on capital. I have always lived within my income, and I have always had something to put aside.

The question of success or failure as a singer is simplified by self-judgment and discrimination. Many voices are not worth the cultivation, and that means time and opportunities lost. Very often students wear out their voices with overstudy before they appear in public. They destroy the freshness of the voice by singing too much.

A Golden Rule for Singers.

As to the length of time to be devoted to study, I myself do not give more than fifteen or twenty minutes to it daily, and these few minutes I devote to scales.

It was my brother, Mr. Ettore Barili, who laid the foundation of my singing, and his method to-day is taught by my nephew, Alfred Barili. My brother-in-law, Mr. Strackosch, taught me certain embellishments and cadenzas, but it was to Ettore Barili that I owed the foundation as well as the finish of my vocal equipment. With him I studied solfeggii, trills, scales; the chromatic scales came naturally. I think I was trilling when I came into the world.

My golden rule in singing is to spare myself until the voice is needed, and then never to give it all out. Put it in the bank. I do not push my voice for the pleasure of the moment. If you are prodigal of your powers at such times, the next time you wish to be generous you cannot.

There is an old Italian proverb that I hold fast to as my guide: "Who goes slowly goes safely; who goes safely goes far." I have always followed that course in the use of my voice. Consequently I have it at command when I need it. I never sang when I was not well enough, neither did I sing when I was doubtful of the condition of my voice. I simply went to bed and said that there was "no one in." Managers came, besought, pleaded, and entreated; but I was not well and I would not sing. The opera-house might remain closed; but if there had been opera then, there would be no opera now.

One instance I remember well when it proved most difficult to refuse. The King of Prussia, later the German Emperor William I., had arranged a Court concert in which I was to sing. Although everything had been prepared at the Palace, when the day arrived I did not feel well and refused to go. To

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Meyerbeer was given the unpleasant task of conveying my refusal. But the King did not resent it, for he came to hear me when I next appeared. During the performance he asked—

"Miss Patti, what caused you to be so ill?"

MADAME PATTI.
A recent portrait by Chancellor, Dublin.

"Your royal climate, your Majesty," was my reply.

The true secret of preserving the voice is not to force it and not to sing when one ought not to.

In the matter of diet and its relation to the voice, I can only say that I have been able to eat and drink in moderation anything I like. During a performance I do not take anything, unless it may be a little chicken soup, nor at such times do I feel like eating. Eating after singing I consider injurious, for one is then always more or less fatigued.

I never make a point of having my dinner at three o'clock on the days that I sing, nor could I ever understand why some singers insist on this plan. I dine half an hour before I go to the hall for a concert, and as I do not appear at the beginning of the programme, I have at least an hour between dining and singing, which interval I always find quite enough. It is too fatiguing to attempt to sing on an empty stomach; and though some indulge in eating after singing, I have always avoided suppers at home in the middle of the night; late suppers disagree with me.

So far as denying myself is concerned, I have not found the slightest difficulty in giving up anything that it is unwise to indulge in. At one time I dieted for four years. That was, however, not due to the demands of my voice.

Over and again it has been said that I never speak on the day on which I am to sing. This is not by any means the case. I talk all I want, but of course I hold no receptions on those days.

Fresh air and plenty of it is of vital importance to the singer. Every day that is not too inclement I take from two and a half to three hours' exercise in the open air, driving and walking. To this regimen I attribute in great degree my good health and powers of endurance. There is nothing like fresh air and exercise for keeping the voice in good order.

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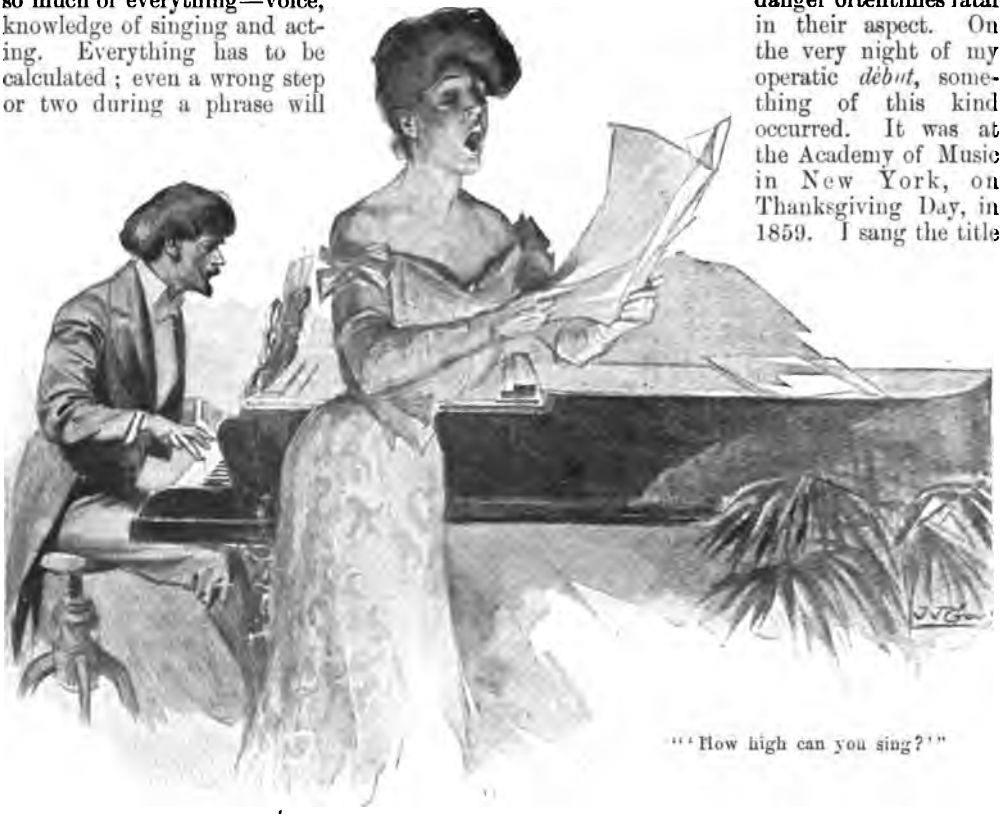
When sodden days dripping with rain come, preventing my going out of doors, I feel quite another being than on those when I follow my course of exercise—the best medicine and the best tonic possible for a singer.

When a singer is about to enter upon a public career, there is one point to be considered—that of fitness for concert or for opera. I think if you can sing in concert, if you have feeling and discernment, you can sing in opera, though in my opinion some who are good in concert are by no means fitted for opera. The operatic stage demands so much of everything—voice, knowledge of singing and acting. Everything has to be calculated; even a wrong step or two during a phrase will bring one into the wings instead of to the front of the stage. Ease of movement, dramatic instinct and feeling are all absolutely necessary to the opera singer, and yet without them a fairly good voice may bring to its possessor a degree of success on the concert platform. Again, the demands on personal appearance are far more exacting on the operatic than on the concert stage, though equally of decided advantage to those who fortunately command them. Another most important gift, and one absolutely indispensable to success in opera, is presence of mind, for on the stage it is always the unexpected that happens. In my early career I knew no such thing as nervousness. I had nothing to lose then, but later it was different. When I had made my reputation, I grew more and more nervous, for it is one thing to build up a reputation and another thing to sustain it.

Not alone on the stage, but in the auditorium, incidents are continually arising that demand of a singer an absolute self-control, command of memory and vocal powers in the face of distractions and of danger oftentimes fatal in their aspect. On the very night of my operatic *début*, something of this kind occurred. It was at the Academy of Music in New York, on Thanksgiving Day, in 1859. I sang the title part in Donizetti's "Lucia," with Brignoli as Edgardo. A man had hung his coat carelessly over the front of the gallery, and a pistol in the pocket went off in the middle of the performance. For an instant everyone stopped still on the stage; then we went ahead again, and the audience was reassured.



"'How high can you sing?'"

What Presence of Mind may Mean.

Another accident, more serious in the possibility of its consequences, happened at Bucharest. A man had climbed upon the

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irons at the side of the stage to get sight of me. He slipped and fell on a poor woman who was standing in the wings. She was badly hurt, and her cries resounding through the house caused someone to call "Fire!" In an instant the excitable audience was in a panic. The thought flashed through my mind that a stampede for the doors might bring death to hundreds. "It is no fire!" I called. "It is nothing!" And I continued singing the cadenza, with flute accompaniment, in "Lucia." After I had sung a few bars, the audience was quieted.

Another time, in Vienna, I was again singing in "Lucia," and had just begun the cadenza, with the flute, in the mad scene, when my long, flimsy sleeve caught fire in the gas. Without stopping, I tore it off and finished the *aria*. But that time, after I got behind the scenes, and everything was over, I fainted. On another occasion in San Francisco, just at the close of an act in "Lucia," a man threw a bomb, which exploded on the stage. The audience rose in terror, and fearing a panic might ensue, I stepped to the front of the stage and began singing "Home, Sweet Home." The audience resumed their seats, and after a few bars, quiet was restored.

Once, I was singing in this same "Lucia," with a tenor as Edgardo whom I had never seen. As Edgardo and his brother are dressed alike in the first scene, when I appeared on the stage I did not know which one I was to sing to. Already my music was sounding from the orchestra. "Which is Edgardo?" I asked hastily.

"The one to the left," was the answer. And I hurried towards him, singing as I went.

Yet another time there was demand for presence of mind in an episode of a different description. The opera was "Traviata," and the tenor a forgetful one. In the duet in the last act he suddenly began to sing my part. In a flash, I had to take up his until, as suddenly, his memory returned. When the curtain was rung down, he thanked me with tears in his eyes. It was the second incident of the kind that had happened to him, and the first had not been so fortunate for both singers.

A BRIC-À-BRAC AFFAIR.

HE is a soldier young and gay,
She is a dainty miss,
He leans toward her with a smile,
Her lips invite a kiss.
The nook is one for lovers planned,
A place to bill and coo,
Where sweeping folds of thick brocade
And screens shut off the view.

But overhead the china clock—
Pink porcelain—ticks away
The minutes into hours, and yet
The silly twain delay.
The gallant's arm is empty still,
And still the maid coquettes,
Because they are a little pair
Of Dresden statuettes.

MINNA IRVING.

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THE GREAT ADVENTURE.

By BLISS CARMAN.

THERE'S many a quiet seaport that waits the daring sail;
There's many a lonely farer by many a doubtful trail.
And what should be their star
To lead them safe and far—
What guide to take them o'er the crest, what pilot past the bar—
Save Love, the great adventurer who will not turn nor quail?

As a voyager might remember how the face of earth was changed,
All the dreary grey of winter forgotten and estranged—
When he rode the tempest through
And steered into the blue
Of a tranquil tropic morning diaphanous and new,
With palms upon the sea-rim where the flying fishes ranged;

As the lover in old story on a night of wind and rain
Might have stood beneath a window till a lamp should light the pane
And a lady lean one arm
On the glowing square and warm,
A girlish golden figure in a frame of dark and storm—
To look the longest moment ere he turned to life again—

Then set a stubborn shoulder to wind and sleet and snow,
With the weather foul above him and the pavement foul below?
So it happened in my case;
When I saw her, every trace
Of doubt and fear and languor to the pulse of joy gave place,
And the world was great and goodly as He planned it long ago.

There's a shipman who goes sailing where the sea is round and high;
There's a lover who goes piping where winds of morning cry;
And the lilt beneath his heart
Was timed to stop and start,
Till no more ships go sailing, and the green hills fall apart.
O, friends, that minstrel-lover, that mariner am I!

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By E. E. KELLETT.

HOPPY and I were friends; we shared our tuck and did each other's impositions. In opinion, also, we generally agreed; in fact, my first attraction to Hoppy came from finding out that, like me, he preferred Hornby to Lucas as a cricketer. We had also cemented our friendship by passing through several dangers together since the famous one with Farmer Brass; we were like soldiers that had been in the same battles and faced the same fire. Such open friends were we that no one ever ran down Hoppy to me, or me to Hoppy; they knew better.

But all this would, perhaps, not have been enough if we hadn't had our common enemies, the masters. In stalking these foes we found it much better to hunt in couples. Hoppy, I confess, led the way; but I was a very skilful *aide-de-camp*. He it was, also, who laid down the grand principles on which our warfare was to be carried on—principles to which, as every master who had to deal with us knows, we rigidly adhered. We obeyed the great unwritten laws of the strife, and expected the masters to act up to them also.

"We don't really hate masters, as such," said Hoppy to me one day, when we were discussing these general lines of action; "only, of course, in self-defence, we have to adopt a basis of hostility." Hoppy was great at these big words.

"It's their own fault," I said, "if they won't capitulate. We've offered them reasonable terms."

"Of course," replied my friend, "they've got to be honourable foes. War is war, and can't be carried on with rose-water; but if they keep the rules on their side, we'll keep them on ours."

"Of course," I answered.

"There must be no poisoned weapons," he resumed. "A lie's a lie, and we don't use it. If they hit on a precise and direct question—which isn't often—we must tell them the truth."

"That won't trouble us much," I said. "As you say, it isn't often."

"No," he answered. "Most of them, fortunately, are not such sneaks. They give you a chance. They say: 'Are you talking?' when you've just finished. Then, of course, you say 'No.' A lie's a lie, but a cram's only a cram. Or, '*Were* you talking?' That means, as old Taylor is always saying: 'Were you engaged in a continuous course of talking?' So you say 'No' again, if you only *had* talked, and hadn't *been* talking. That isn't a lie; it's only a draw. But you mustn't be sneakish, and do like that little beast Jones, who says there's a difference between speaking and talking, and always manages to be doing the one when Taylor asks him the other."

"It doesn't pay, either," I observed.

"Of course not. Taylor thinks he's a liar, and so he is. No master ever believes

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him. Besides, he lies to the chaps, too, and that's rotten. Now, you and I have established a reputation for truthfulness."

"That's it," I replied. "Every now and then the masters hit on precisely the right question; and then, of course, we answer straight."

"So we do; and it's a great help in the future. You remember the other day Taylor said: 'Did you talk?' It was a slip of his; he meant: 'Were you talking?' but I wasn't such a sneak as to take advantage of that; so it got me. I answered 'Yes,' because though I'd just finished, I *had* talked; and I took my 'impot' like a lamb. And see the result—Taylor thinks I'm honest."

"'Bless the boy!' cried the master."

"So you are," I replied.

"Yes, I am. Of course, it wouldn't be honest with *every* master. Some masters aren't so precise themselves, so it would be unfair to draw them like that. But Taylor's always jawing about absolute precision of language, so he's only got himself to blame if *you* are precise in turn. If it had been Vernon, now, I shouldn't be so careful; *he* never bothers about accuracy."

"He never asks," I said; "he sticks you down for your lines right off."

"He's a straightforward warrior," said Hoppy; "he's a foeman worthy of one's steel, and it's quite a pleasure to cross swords with him."

"Though he generally wins," I put in.

"That isn't the point," said Hoppy. "The fight's the thing, the result an incident. But, as I was saying, you've got to pick your master. Don't try it on with the wrong man. That's the first rule of the game—play fair. If a master jaws you about accuracy, let him be sure he's accurate himself; that's *his* look-out. Taylor's always on at *us* for our want of precision in language; but I bet you we're precise enough in catching *him* out."

"Yes," I answered; "and then, besides, you're not so likely to score with Vernon if you *do* try it on."

"As I've pointed out a hundred times, Sloppy," said my friend severely, "the *result* is not the point. I'm not denying that if we *did* try it on with Vernon, we might catch a Tartar; but what I mean is that we don't try it on because it would be unfair. He's open and above-board with us; we're open and above-board with him. You *do* take such low views of things."

"Well, honesty's the best policy *there*, anyhow. Still, I'm with you about old Taylor. As you say, he *is* too precise; and then, besides, it's so jolly easy to draw him. You get a thousand lines' worth of fun out of him for every hundred you do."

"That isn't it," said Hoppy, "though it's true. What I mean is that it's mere justice for us to fight Taylor with his own weapons; the laws of war allow it, and I shall do it."

"And I'll help you," I said; though I confess it was rather the impunity of the thing than the justice that induced me to join.

Soon after this, it happened that Hoppy and I—we were always in the same form—were having an English lesson with Taylor. It was a scratch form: half the chaps were at drawing, and Taylor used to give us any stuff that came into his head. Once it was "metaphors," and he jawed a lot about "jewels five words long that on the stretched forefinger of all time sparkled for ever," telling us how we ought to admire it. But Hoppy told him it ought to be "fourth

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finger." No one ever wears rings on the forefinger, he said. Old Taylor was rather pleased at that; but when Hoppy went on arguing, he shut him up and went on to "similes."

Well, lately he'd been revelling in fine distinctions and rot about precision of language. One of his tricks was to take a lot of sentences, some right and some wrong, and say: "Correct or justify." This he called "teaching by concrete examples," "the pitfall method," and so on. He was a bit proud of it; he used to say it "roused our reasoning faculties." Most of us hated it, and several chaps used to write and ask their paters to let them take drawing instead. But Hoppy didn't mind. He was going to be a lawyer, he said, and this sort of stuff gave him opportunities of studying accuracy and practising argument. "You can't start diddling juries too early," he would say. Well, anyway, that afternoon we were standing round, and old Fatty plunged straight into his pitfalls.

"'There's a man with a black and a white tie,'" he said solemnly. "Now, what does *that* mean?" As if it mattered! Well, a few fellows, from old practice, spotted what he was after and got it right. Then came a long jaw, that bored us awfully—all except Hoppy. "You see," said Taylor, "as it stands it means the man had *two* ties, one black and the other white. A black and white tie would mean that he had only one, and that partly black and partly white. Do you see, Hopkins?"

"Quite, sir."

"Ah! it seems easy at first sight, doubtless, yet few mistakes are commoner. A soldier, for example, often says: 'I swear on my honour as an officer and a gentleman.' Now, you see, *that* isn't right."

"Of course not, sir. It's wrong to swear."

"I don't mean *morally* wrong—I mean *logically*. Now, how is he wrong in his words?"

"Don't know, sir."

"There," said Mr. Taylor, with a little touch of satisfaction in his tone; "you said you understood, but you don't. He isn't both *an* officer and *a* gentleman; he is both officer and gentleman. He's not two, but one."

Hoppy's face assumed a look of utter sheepish stupidity which no one but a really clever boy could have put on.

"But, sir"—hesitatingly and with great deprecation of manner—"aren't you a schoolmaster and a gentleman?"

"Not both—" he paused for a moment—"I mean, not *two* things. Of course, in a sense I am both—that is, to be precise——" He was beginning to explain; but Hoppy was in on him before he'd time to fix it up quite straight.

"*Can't* a man be both, sir? I don't see——"

"It's this way," said old Fatty, with some embarrassment. "If I were *a* schoolmaster and *a* gentleman, I should be calling myself two persons, just like *a* black and *a* white tie."

"Would they be different, sir? Why can't you be both?" The rest of the form, which had hitherto been taking but a languid interest in the matter, woke up as it became plain that old Taylor was getting flustered. They didn't as a rule care much for Hoppy's jaws; Hoppy was a bit too clever for most of them; but every chap likes to see a master stuck, you know.

"What I mean is this," said old Taylor, stammering a bit, for he knew he was going to be obscure, and he prided himself on his lucidity—"that if I said I saw a schoolmaster and a gentleman walking down the street, I should mean I'd seen two persons——"

"Two quite different persons, sir?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Then is a schoolmaster something altogether different from a gentleman, sir?"

"Of course not. I could say: 'A schoolmaster and *another* gentleman walking down the street,' if I liked."

"Then the schoolmaster would be *a* gentleman, too."

"Of course he would."

"But you said just now he wasn't, sir," said Hoppy, looking very much puzzled.

"There, that'll do," said Taylor testily. "I can't spend all day explaining. Try another: 'The Moor, seizing a bolster, full of rage and jealousy, smothers her'—how is that wrong, Montagu?"

Needless to say, I couldn't tell.

"Come, now," said old Fatty, "it's simple enough. A matter of placing your adjective clauses, that's all."

But I was still hopeless. This was a lesson in which no marks were given, and it wasn't worth while bothering about. So again it came to Hoppy.

"Ought to be *full of* jealousy, sir," said he.

"Very good, so far. Why?" said Taylor, again letting himself in for a fruitless discussion.

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"Because it might mean 'The Moor, full of rage, and jealousy, smothers her.'"

"Dear me!" said the master, "was there ever such obtuseness? In the first place, don't you see that *smothers* is singular?"

"But, sir," argued Hoppy quite irrelevantly, "rage and jealousy are the same thing, and so a singular verb will do. It's like soldier and gentleman, sir."

Old Taylor, not unnaturally, was half beside himself. "What *does* the boy mean?" he cried.

"Why, sir, unless they're the same, you can't be full of them. If you're full of one thing, there's no room for anything else. You can't be full of two things at once."

"Bless the boy!" cried the master, completely forgetting the real point in his irritation at Hoppy's stupidity. "Can't a cup be full of milk and water?"

"No, sir; only of *mingled* milk and water." He seemed to be puzzling it out with some difficulty.

"Very well, then; let us say *mingled* rage and jealousy, if you are so particular. Don't you see another mistake — in the order, now?"

"I've forgotten the sentence, sir."

Taylor repeated it. "The Moor, seizing a bolster, full of rage and jealousy, smothers her."

"'Of *mingled* rage and jealousy,'" said Hoppy.

"Well, mingled, then. What else?"

"Do you say 'mingled *and*,' or 'mingled *with*,' sir?"

"Both will do."

"Both at once, sir?"

"Either will do," said Mr. Taylor, who, though an irritable old chap, liked to stick at the dullest boy till he got him straight; and Hoppy certainly, to judge by his appearance just then, was as dull as the dullest.

"'The Moor, seizing a bolster, full of either mingled rage and jealousy, or of rage mingled with jealousy, smothers her.' It doesn't sound right, somehow, sir."

"I should think not. Now, *where* is the bolster?"

"The bolster, sir?" said Hoppy, with a look of blank bewilderment which would have all but taken in Vernon himself.

"Yes, the bolster—where is it in the sentence?"

"In the sentence, sir?"

"Yes, what words does it come before?"

"Before all the rest of the sentence, sir." At this point, while still looking demurely stupid to the master, Hoppy winked at the form, as if to say: "I've kept him at this a decent time, you chaps, haven't I?" and he looked so funny that first Jones, and then all the rest of us, burst into a roar of laughter, and Taylor, who was shirty when he thought he was being drawn, shrieked out: "All of you do me fifty lines by to-morrow morning." I can't remember what happened afterwards; we were all so angry with Hoppy that we couldn't think of anything else.

At the end of the lesson I went for him. "What an ass you were to get us all that 'impot'!" I said.

"Ass yourself," he retorted calmly.

"Well," I replied, "you can jaw old Taylor as much as you like, but you oughtn't to get the whole form into a row."

"Don't you see, you fool!" he answered affectionately—"don't you see?"

"See what?

"Why, 'all of you fifty lines.' That means that *all together* do them."

"What of that? All or any, it's much the same."

"No; all, not each. The lot of us can manage the fifty pretty easily, I fancy."

"He didn't mean that," I said.

"I didn't say *he* meant it; I said *his words* meant it. He ought to have said *each of you*. I told you I should catch him out. As for me, I shan't do any."

"You'll have to do five, anyhow," I replied; "there are ten in the form, and five's your share."

"He didn't say everyone had to do his share; he said the whole form had to do fifty among them. Jones shall do ten—five for himself and five for me."

"That's beastly unfair," I said.

"Why? Jones was the first to laugh. He caused it all."

"Yes," I said, "but it's beastly unfair if he does yours and doesn't do mine."

"He can if you like. I know he's going to do mine, anyhow."

At that moment Jones came into the classroom. "Jones," said Hoppy, "how many of those lines are you going to do?"

"Fifty, I suppose," said Jones lugubriously. "A beastly shame, too! It was all your fault."

"So it was," answered Hoppy. As a general rule he would have punched Jones's head for his cheek; but now he showed a strange meekness. "So it was. Sorry awfully, old chap; but I couldn't have thought he'd be such a beast as to punish the whole lot for me."

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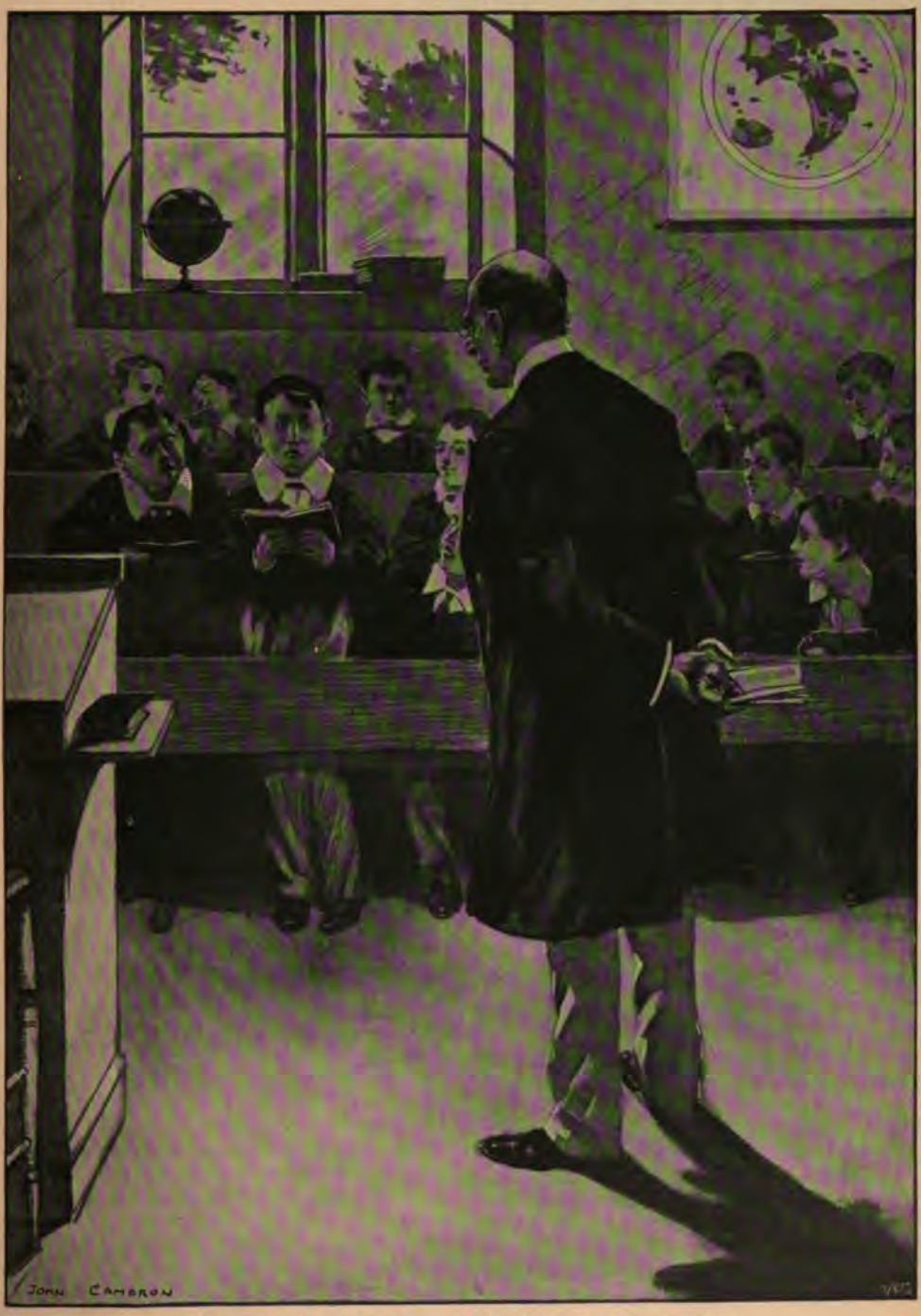

"You never heard such a mess as the little wretch made of it."

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"He *is* a beast," said Jones.

"You're right. Well, get it done as soon as you can; I'll try to make it straight for you some day." Jones went off, sad, but moved by Hoppy's unwonted kindness.

"Why were you so mild?" I asked when he'd gone.

"Because, without any trouble of ours, he's doing all. I say, you chaps," he said to the form in a loud voice, "you needn't do that 'impot,' you know."

"Why not?" they all cried.

"Oh! I've got you off."

Some of them doubted; but they knew Hoppy quite well enough to be sure that, even though he might be fooling them now, he would stand by them in the morning; and so they resolved to take things easily and see what turned up.

Next morning, therefore, out of the expected five hundred lines, only fifty appeared, and those from the usually backward Jones. Old Taylor was a little huffy about it.

"Where are the rest?" he cried angrily.

No answer.

"Montagu, where are yours?"

"I haven't done them, sir."

"Why not?"

"I thought you said all of us had to do them, sir."

"So I did. Then why haven't you done them?"

"Because all of us have done them, sir."

"Come, this nonsense won't do. What do you mean?"

Courage failed me at the critical moment. I couldn't brazen it out any longer. Besides, Taylor looked so angry that I thought he might half kill me if I went on. Fortunately Hoppy came to the rescue.

"You see, sir," he said boldly, "you told all of us to do fifty lines. Now, we thought you meant that the whole form put together was to do them, not each of us, sir. So between us we did them."

You should have seen old Taylor's face while Hoppy was speaking. He looked as if he could have knocked him into the middle of next week. But he didn't. I really rather admired the old chap for holding himself in: it must have cost him a good deal. Well, when he'd managed to keep his hands off Hoppy for the first few moments, he'd time to reflect, you see; and Taylor was pretty shrewd if he gave himself time, only as a rule he was hasty and didn't. He stopped dead still for a good minute and a half. The chaps were really frightened of him then; he'd never stopped so long in his life before. Then he spoke; and it was a queer thing he said; and very calm and quiet it sounded, too.

"Well, Hopkins, you ought to know by this time that *between* implies two persons. You say you did this imposition between you. Jones is one; you must mean you are the other. Is this true?"

Now, here Taylor had hit on one of those direct questions which Hoppy had said he always answered on the straight; so you see he was caught out. He wasn't one of those chaps who wriggle—he was an honest fellow, was Hoppy—so he answered right out: "No, sir. I didn't do a line of it."

Then Taylor went on with the lesson. It was Latin; and, instead of beginning at the top of the form, as usual, he began with Jones, who didn't know much about it, you bet. He never did know anything about his lessons. When he stuck, Taylor made another chap answer, and then went back to Jones again, and so on through the whole lesson. You never heard such a mess as the little wretch made of it all; but Taylor stuck to him like a man. We were all glad when he finished. It had been a solemn affair, I can tell you.

Five minutes before the bell, Taylor stopped and said: "Well, *between you* you've done pretty badly." He stopped a moment for his words to sink in and then went on: "I know you'll say that Jones is the one who failed, and that I didn't put on the rest; but, you see, Jones *is* the form. If Jones is all of you, then when Jones fails, all of you fail. So, before six o'clock, *every one of you* will write out the lesson ten times. Mind, Hopkins, I say *every one of you*; but *all of you* will come to this classroom to do it."

We all thought that Taylor had scored; and some of us were very angry with Hoppy for having got us into such a mess. But before the end of the morning, Hoppy went to old Fatty and told him it was *his* fault, and wanted to do the lesson a hundred times, so as to save the form. Well, Taylor wasn't a bad old chap, after all, and let him off with fifty; so it all came right in the end. We rather respected Taylor after that, though he didn't make his pitfall lessons any shorter, all the same.

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ONE of the most interesting and one of the most fascinating additions of recent years to zoological exhibits is the modern reptile-house. Both the animal and the vegetable world are represented in it. It is a world of forests, dusky swamps, barren deserts, and tangled jungles brought from North and South and East and West and crowded under one roof. And under the roof, caged among giant palms, hanging bush-rope, and drooping resurrection ferns, there squirm and coil the most mysterious and uncanny and merciless of all of God's creatures, housed according to the most advanced ideas of animal science, with all the surroundings peculiar to the wild and natural state of each. This novelty of showing the animals, and the modern facilities for feeding them as once they fed themselves, for studying reptile diseases, and even for operating with the surgeon's knife, have practically revolutionised the snake-house of old into the marvellous reptile-house of to-day.

To the life of the snake there is no known parallel in natural history. Destruction, merciless extermination, and eternal war mark every phase of it. From the very beginning, in the very nature of its food and its manner of eating, the snake is repulsively fascinating. Among the larger reptiles the fight over food frequently leads to the most horrible of combats, each principal seeking to get into his mouth the head of his opponent, after which there remains only the cruel swallowing process. The most hideous form of cannibalism—kind eating kind *alive*—is the revolting diet of a large portion of the reptile family.

The most atrocious cannibal among all the snakes is the king cobra. The sight of this snake feeding is not one for sensitive nerves. In its natural state this monarch of reptiles contents himself with lizards when nothing better offers; but when captive he declines to touch food unless tempted by the morsel of a squirming six-foot snake. The spectacle of a frightened "black-racer" being introduced into the cage would be more pitiful were it not that he himself is a cannibal. For an instant the dread brown head peers around a corner of the water tank at the doomed one, who has not a chance in a thousand in his favour. But he makes a single frantic attempt for his life. His motion is lightning. Cornered hopelessly as he is, he whips out like a streak of light in one mighty effort to coil about the enemy's throat to choke him. But the cobra is quicker still. One dart—too quick for the human eye to follow—and the black head is between the relentless jaws, which, with their back-set teeth and alternate outward and inward motion, steadily draw the fighting, squirming thing inward. Gradually the food is swallowed, with frequent pauses for breath and with halts to repress the squirming and fighting of the prey struggling inch by inch in the throes of a living death. Such is the meal of the cannibal snake, whether he be fed with live food by the hand of man or whether he hunt in his own lair.

But in the modern reptile-house it happens frequently that the naturalist himself must take a hand in devising ways and means to coax his rare and splendid specimens into eating. Often the snake-man is unable to supply his cobra's demand for large black-snakes. The specimens soon grow scarce in

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any one locality when hunted persistently. To the owner of a valuable cobra the situation is critical. The reptile, sometimes representing in money value the equivalent of a good road-horse, refuses to eat a blacksnake not of an alluring size. Birds, frogs, fish, rats, chickens, and the tid-bits that attract other snakes in captivity, the great serpent declines. Only one alternative remains to the snake-man—he must artificially produce a blacksnake to fit the requirements. The naturalist consults his blacksnake cage. Here, in the top of the cage-tree, hangs a great bunch of reptiles, knotted and twisted like rain-worms into a hopeless snarl to keep one another warm. The man selects the largest snake in the collection and begins to disentangle the bunch. Sometimes an angered snake turns on the intruder and sinks its teeth into the offending hand. But the wound is not poisonous, and it is what a man must expect from time to time when handling snakes. Inch by inch the victim is pulled and twisted and looped out of the heap, until he is held squirming and dangling by the tail. Then, like the lash of a whip, the snake is whirled through the air. At the end of the sweep there is a snap, and the reptile hangs lifeless, its neck broken. Then comes a stuffing process. Down the throat of the dead reptile a frog is forced. On top of this a second frog, and then a third, and so on until the shiny black body, at first no larger round than a policeman's club, has attained the diameter of a man's wrist. Distorted to these enticing dimensions, he is greedily devoured by the cobra, and there has been smuggled into him sustenance enough for two weeks, though of the "stuffing" the animal would refuse to partake unless in this form of a "snake-pill."

THE RATTLESNAKE IN HIS NATURAL HAUNTS.

What the blacksnake is to the cobra the garter-snake is to the blacksnake, and the frog and the tiny field-mouse are to the garter-snake. According to the estimate of one scientist, at least twenty times as many snakes as are used for exhibition purposes are needed annually to feed the "star attractions." Snake-hunters scour the neighbouring fields and woods and swamps, but most of the snakes used for food purposes are born and bred right in the reptile-houses, and the sight of four or five cages filled with garter-snakes, each pair to be depended upon to furnish from forty to eighty young each year, is a common sight in large snake collections.

Sometimes snakes quarrel over their food, and in the ensuing fight one of the combatants swallows his opponent alive. In a famous New York reptile collection a remarkable instance of this kind happened recently.

A coachwhip-snake had caught the head of a black-racer in his jaws and was swallowing him. The racer was more than half way down the throat of the coachwhip fellow when interference came. A snake-man grasped each reptile by the tail and readily pulled the one outside of the other, when it was found that the blacksnake still held in his mouth a small frog, the object of the fight. Not being able to take the frog from its opponent, the coachwhip snake had decided to swallow the whole competing show—snake, frog, and all. The blacksnake,

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unharmed, finished its meal where it had been interrupted.

Among the most interesting specimens in respect to their food and their habits while eating is the great American viper—the rattlesnake. At large, the splendid brownish black reptile—there never was a fairer in a fight—roams the corn and the wheat fields of the farmer, hunting rats that threaten crops. Quick and fearless in attack in his natural haunts, when in captivity he develops a dignity which if interfered with would lead even to starvation, for few full-grown rattlers will deign to eat with more than a single companion in the cage. Even with a pair in one cage, but one will eat at a time, while the other remains perfectly motionless in a far corner of the den. If, while the male viper is engaged in eating, the female glides towards him, or across his body, the feeding ceases instantly. Slowly, with all the stateliness of one of the higher animals, the wicked, flat, triangular head rises, the merciless, cold, black eyes send shafts at the intruder, and, as if carved in stone, both snakes remain motionless. Only after some minutes is the meal resumed. Unless the snakes are confined in a large cage, it is necessary to kill the rat before feeding him to a rattlesnake. The little brown animal of brawn and muscle is no mean antagonist for even a full-grown rattler. A born athlete and quick as thought, the intended victim would feint and jump, and, landing on the neck of his foe, would bite the backbone, paralysing the viper. In an open field the rattlesnake rarely would succumb, but in even a large-sized cage, where space forbids the free manœuvring of the snake, the chances would be much in favour of the rat.

In captivity most snakes are fed on dead food for more reasons than the restriction of the S.P.C.A. Boa-constrictors would much prefer live chickens to the dead ones thrown to them; but should a lusty rooster be let loose in a cage between a pair of boas, there would soon be a snake-knot which it would require half-a-dozen snake-men a day to unravel, if indeed either of the reptiles were alive.

A most famous instance of snake-feeding happened a year ago in the New York Zoolo-

REGAL PYTHON.

"A creature in length the height of a two-storey house; girth measure bigger than a large man's thigh; possessing within its tremendous frame the strength of twelve men; of a brown and purple coloured skin; with a head big as a wolf's; eyes like russet shoe-buttons, and a pair of jaws capable of swallowing a full-sized Newfoundland dog."

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gical Park, when Czarina, a twenty-foot regal python, one of the largest specimens in captivity and known to very many naturalists, was fed against her will. Like all big pythons in captivity, she was trying to starve herself to death. Imagine a creature in length the height of a two-storey house; in weight 280 lb.; girth measure bigger than a large man's thigh; possessing within its tremendous frame the strength of twelve men; of a brown and purple coloured skin; with a head big as a wolf's; eyes like russet shoe-buttons, and a pair of jaws capable of swallowing a full-sized Newfoundland dog.

For more than six weeks Czarina had not touched food, when Curator R. L. Ditmars, in charge of the reptile-house, decided to capture the monster, to take her out of her cage, to stretch her full length, and to force food down her throat. Every keeper in every department of the Park was notified to report in the reptile-house that evening, and the snake meal was prepared. Thirty pounds of rabbits were killed, bound together with twine, and fastened to a bamboo pole ten feet long. This was set aside for later use.

That evening, when the visitors had gone, the fight began—twelve men against the snake. The creature lay coiled and re-coiled in a great three-foot heap, in a plate-glass cage, ten by twenty feet, and as high as its width. Through a slot in the big door at the back of the cage the Curator peered to locate the snake. Then he threw open the door. The monster languidly raised her head, and for an interval man and serpent glared at each other, the one surprised, the other awed in spite of himself. A glimmer of wickedness lit the small, reddish brown eyes, and a quiver seemed to run through the dreadful body. Then the Curator, only a burlap bag in hand, and trusting to the eleven to follow, threw himself towards the monster, and in an instant the bag was over her head. Blinded and with the hands of a man clutching her throat, like a giant spring Czarina hurled herself loose among the struggling men who had filed into the cage and were trying to clutch the wonderful coils. Through the cloud of dust within appeared glimpses of the fighting keepers and flashes of the lashing body, while the scuffle of feet and the shouts and cries of men sounded over all. The Curator, still clutching the throat of his great adversary, staggered about, whipped back and forth like a jackstraw. Grabbing, groping, hugging, and tugging, the others were tossed like chaff here and there, only to fall back to their work, which now had grown a matter of life and death, for to release the snake and to permit all hands to escape in safety would now have been impossible. Through the dust were seen five or six men lying side by side on their bellies trying to pin the snake to earth, but the next instant they were up in the air, tossed by the dreadful spring of those giant coils. The men were panting with exertion, and their shouts and cries of encouragement to one another came from parched and strained throats. And so another ten minutes dragged on, while photographers in front of the cage ran about like chickens without heads for vantage points to snap their pictures.

But even Czarina's tremendous strength was unable to withstand indefinitely the assault of the small army of hardened and trained animal-men. At the end of another five minutes they had pinned down the snake. Like football players they lay, side by side, panting and exhausted, while the struggles ceased gradually in the great frame. Mr. Ditmars, still clutching the wicked head, was the first to stagger out of the cage. One by one the others followed, each lugging a share of the snake. The python was stretched full length on the floor of the house. The custody of the head was turned over to an assistant, and the Curator prepared to administer the food. The great jaws were forced apart, and the bamboo pole with its bologna of rabbits was shoved into the mouth and down the endless throat. There was a final desperate squirm as the operation began, but the python was readily held. Still, as if lifeless, she remained, while down, down went the food, until, when nearly the entire pole was buried within the reptile, the rabbits were wriggled loose, and the great snake had been forced to feed.

The curse of the snake still rests heavily upon man. In the dense jungles of the far South and the distant East, among savage and semi-civilised races, the annual crop of deaths due to snake venom amounts to little less than a ravage. For ages men have fought in vain against the poison of venomous snakes. To-day, an anti-toxin has been discovered which may possibly in time greatly mitigate the evil, though as yet it has not been produced in sufficient quantities to effect any material decrease in the annual harvest of death from snake-bites.

Venomous snakes may be divided into two classes—the cobras and the viperoids. The cobras, inhabitants of India, form a class apart. To the viperoids belong all other venomous species, including the splendid

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CONTEST BETWEEN TWELVE MEN AND A PYTHON.

"Grabbing, groping, hugging, and tugging, they were tossed like chaff here and there, only to fall back to their work, which now had grown a matter of life and death."

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American rattler, the mocassin, the fer-de-lance of the West Indies, and the deadly bushmaster of Venezuela and the Guianas.

Diametrically opposite, though equally fatal, are the effects of the cobra and the viperoid poisons. Diametrically opposite also are the two methods of attack. The cobra at times is aggressive, the king cobra being said even to pursue man. Silent, without the least warning, and from a place where you would least suspect, the round head darts out of a thicket, a sharp pain causes you to exclaim, and the frightful fangs of the snake are buried in your flesh. Like the grip of a bull-dog they hold fast, while from five to ten feet of animated cable come stretching out of the thicket to coil leisurely beneath the dread head.

For this eternal hold on the victim there is a natural reason. The fangs of a ten-foot cobra are but a third of an inch long. It is impossible, therefore, to squirt the venom deep in a single stroke. In order to give the venom time to absorb, the snake must retain its hold. The fatal poison contains about 95 per cent. of nerve-destroying and about 5 per cent. of blood-destroying elements. Within five minutes the pain leaves the wound, and even the shock of the attack begins to wear off. There is little suffering, nor will there be to the relentless end. Only if by chance the bite is one from a small snake, or if a fresh supply of anti-toxin happens to be at hand, is there a chance for your life. If one recovers from the immediate effects, within a week one is as healthy as ever.

While the poison of the cobra often kills within the hour, there have been cases where the "strike" of a rattlesnake and a bush-master have caused death within ten minutes. Naturalists accept, however, that the king cobra, owing to its great size and the consequent quantity and quality of poison emitted, is the most dangerous of all the snakes.

FEEDING THE PYTHON.

"The great jaws were forced apart, and the bamboo pole with its bologna of rabbits was shoved into the mouth and down the endless throat."

To illustrate the effects of the poisons of the viperoids, there is probably no better example than that of the rattlesnake. The viper strikes in self-defence, when angered or suddenly startled. Keen, sharp fangs, long and slender, and pointed as shad bones, make possible a quick attack which sends the

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venom deep into veins and arteries within the fraction of a second. Coiled, with head and forebody extended in the shape of a letter S, the rattler lies. The fat, wicked body is motionless and steady as though cast in steel, the black, beady eyes riveted on the victim. Only the tail with its warning rattles is performing an evolution. The attack is sharp and quick. Quick as thought the fangs have been buried an inch or more into the flesh. The poison is quite the opposite of the cobra's, containing about 95 per cent. of blood-destroying and about 5 per cent. of nerve-destroying elements. With all the vigour of a sharp acid the venom circulates, attacking the walls of the veins and the red corpuscles in the blood, and causing untold agony. Quick blood-poisoning is the result, and all the excruciating pain endured by a sufferer from that sickness during a two weeks' period is crowded into the few remaining hours of the victim's life. Unless the heart action can be kept up by stimulants, the end comes within a few hours. Anti-toxin may save the victim, but the difficulty of obtaining this in a state of preservation when needed renders it practically useless to humanity in general. And even with the anti-toxin at hand, the after-effects would remain. For a long time the victim may suffer from blood diseases, carbuncles, abscesses, and frequently gangrene.

The young of the poisonous species—deserted from the very first by the parent snakes—are as dangerous as if full grown, from the moment they enter the world. The proprietor of a Philadelphia museum learned this to his cost not long ago. In a big glass case, partitioned through the middle by a wire screen, there lived side by side an eleven-foot anaconda (of the constrictor family) and a colony of cotton-mouth moccassins. It was impossible for the mocassins to glide through the narrow meshes of the screen, or even to venture an occasional "strike" at their large and peaceful neighbour. But during the night a brood of young cotton-mouths unexpectedly appeared —babies, not five inches long. They squirmed through the meshes of the partition, and before they had been two hours in this world were gliding joyfully over the lifeless body of the huge constrictor, who lay poisoned by the youngsters' fangs.

The extraction of the venom from live specimens for experimental purposes is a process of much interest. For the larger snakes a special apparatus has been devised; but in the handling of the smaller-sized vipers, like the mocassin, the experts use little ceremony. They work boldly and quickly, and think little more of handling a wicked viper with the sting of death in its head than of capturing a vicious cat.

A mocassin, for example, lies in the diminutive swamp of his cage, all thoughtless of trouble, when suddenly the door of his cage is thrown open. A hand holding a stout stick intrudes. In an instant the viper

THE FOOD OF THE BIG FELLOWS.
"A great bunch of reptiles, knotted and twisted like rain-worms into a hopeless snarl."

has coiled and struck out at the nearest object threatening—the stick. Almost before he can withdraw his fangs, the stick comes down across his back, right behind the head, pinning him to the floor of the cage, while the hand reaches in, grasps the neck, and bears the snake to the operating-room. To a casual observer it seems ridiculously simple and easy, but the snake-man takes no chances. His thumb and forefinger tremble

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with the pressure he exerts on the throat of his captive, while the eyes of the viper bulge with the choking.

To collect the venom, an ordinary sheet of writing-paper is used. This is folded once upon itself, cylinder fashion, and

COPPERHEAD, NEXT TO THE RATTLESNAKE THE MOST VENOMOUS OF AMERICAN VIPERS.

approached to the mouth of the reptile. At first it refuses to bite. It is necessary to nag it with the bait. Then the mouth opens, like the mouth of a cat, showing the long, thin poison-fangs and the back-set teeth in a setting of sickly pink. As the jaws come together, there is a pricking of the paper, and later only these punctures show on the exterior of the roll. But when the sheet is unwrapped, the venom is found —canary yellow in colour, viscous as milk, —enough to fill a tablespoon and to kill three strong men.

The reader is now in a position to appreciate a remarkable feat of snake-surgery which, like the feeding of the regal python, took place in the New York Zoological Park under Curator Ditmars. Naigina, a splendid ten-foot king cobra, had developed an abscess next to one of her poison-fangs, and unless this were removed she would die. To capture the dangerous reptile, to force her jaws apart, and to cut the abscess, was the problem. The Curator had a plan, and he called for an extra fat snake-pill. When the stuffed snake appeared, it was distended to the bursting point. For more than a month the cobra had not touched food. Mr. Ditmars summoned five keepers, armed himself with a surgeon's pincers, and proceeded to the attack. In the centre of the door, high up from the floor, where the poisonous head would not be apt to dart through the instant an opening was shown, there was a circular aperture protected with a slide, and through this the snake-pill was threaded. The hungry snake took hold of it at once. Frequently she stopped, in evident pain, but each time she resumed until the long, black thing was half way down her throat. This was the moment to act. The door was thrown open, and before the cobra could disgorge herself to fight, she was seized by the head and throat, while other hands grasped her body and tail. Then the mouth was forced wide apart while the pincers did their work, and the finest specimen of cobra in captivity was thus saved to the collection.

The price asked for a snake depends on its value as a specimen, the scarcity of the species, the danger and difficulty of catching and transporting it, and, above all, the demand for the snake. A regal python of the size of Czarina, broken to captivity, is valued in the neighbourhood of £80. A pair of fine diamond-back rattlesnakes, from six to seven feet long, may be bought at prices varying from a shilling to four shillings a foot. But most of all the prices depend upon the number of snake-men—naturalists, museum proprietors, directors of zoological gardens, and snake-fanciers—who are present to bid against each other for any particular snake.

The white man is, perhaps, the most expert snake-hunter in the world. Your practised snake-man thinks but little of letting loose his rattlesnake just to show you the method of capture. He knows he can recapture the reptile at will without danger to himself, providing always that he has a sight of the snake. Whether he captures it

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on the concreted floor of a reptile-house or in the wilds of a mountain gorge, the method used is the same, and is the same as that used for the mocassin or any other viper of equal size. A six-foot pole, long enough to extend beyond the danger-zone of the poison-fangs and carefully aimed, pins down the prey till the hunter secures it by the neck and thrusts it unceremoniously into his snake-bag.

It is only when snakes are hunted in swamps, where the yielding ground would make secure pinning down impossible, that another method—used also in the capture of the bigger poisonous snakes like the cobra—is brought into play. A long pole, supplied at one end with a wire loop controlled by the hunter from the opposite end, is the hunter's weapon. The reptile, goaded and maddened by the sight of the enemy, lies ready awaiting his approach. His eyes are fastened only upon his intended victim. With the stupidity of his family, he does not notice the loop until it has "ringed" him and he is squirming in the wire tightening about his throat.

But aside from mankind the snake has many enemies. It is as if half of creation were sworn to war against him. Even the tiny red robin fights him; so do the nightingale, and the owl, and many other birds. The mongoose, the ordinary house-cat, as well as many wild species of the cat family, and the pig, domestic or wild, all fight the snake and destroy it. But the most relentless exterminator of reptiles is a member of the family itself — the beautiful, lithe, yellow and black kingsnake, the friend of man and the avowed enemy of anything that creeps or crawls, regardless of size or poison-fang. A native of South America, the kingsnake is between five and eight feet long, and no thicker around than a man's thumb. Built in every muscle and bone for speed and tremendous constricting power, there is not another snake on earth that can withstand his assault. He is immune to the poison of the cobra and of the rattler alike, and the strength of a thirty-foot python has no terrors for him. Within five minutes from the opening of the fight, the kingsnake could kill the biggest python that ever lived. Ferocious as the little constrictor is towards his own kind, towards man he is friendly, and rarely tries to escape when met afield. If picked up in the hand, he will coil about his captor's arm, evidently pleased at the exhibition of friendliness.

It is natural that from time immemorial a creature so repulsive and so incomprehensible as the snake should have given excuse for many of the weirdest and most absurd myths. There is the story of the "hoopsnake"—the fellow who takes his tail in his mouth, rolls hooplike over the ground with the rapidity of a whirlwind, till he fetches up against the invariable cottonwood tree, which begins to fade within the hour, and in less than a day stands charred and black, poisoned by the frightful venom sent into the bark.

WATER MOCASSIN, ONE OF THE MOST DREADED AMERICAN VIPERS.

No snake of the hoopsnake species is known outside of mythical science. Similarly mythical is the "milksnake." When of an evening the farmer finds the output of a herd short by thirty or forty quarts, he says that the milksnake has been around. The

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reptile he describes as but three feet long, with a proportionate girth, and yet this diminutive animal is charged with having stored away something like half a can of milk.

Many popular misconceptions regarding the lives of snakes are still prevalent. The setting of the sun, for example, has nothing to do with the death of a snake. When a snake is decapitated, it is dead at once. The tail will remain sensitive and will wriggle for several hours after death, but the movement is purely spasmodic and ceases in time without reference to the position of the sun.

Another popular fallacy is that a rattlesnake will commit suicide when hopelessly cornered, by sinking its own fangs into its sides. No poisonous snake is susceptible to the poison of its own kind. Two cobras in a fight know this. Neither reptile tries to strike the other. The combat is a live swallowing match.

Another mistaken notion is partly based on fact, the only fact which seems to impute to a snake any of the higher motives. A blacksnake, the story has it, will open its mouth to swallow its young in time of danger. It is true the black-racer swallows its young when threatened, but there is no record that the little ones ever see daylight again. Instead, the mother lies peaceful, much in the manner of having enjoyed a good meal—the most unnatural of all cannibals, the consumer of her own flesh and blood, and but another example of the rare and loathsome creatures that make up an uncanny world by themselves.

IN SURREY LANES.

IN Surrey lanes the dead leaves lie to-day,
And bare, brown boughs touch hands across the way;
The summer birds are flown to southern plains,
Only the tawny-breasted robin reigns
In these dismantled palaces of May.
And still some wandering fragrance dimly feigns
The breath of woodlands fresh with April rains,
A phantom of lost Spring that flits alway
In Surrey lanes.

Spring's phantom knocks on Winter's window-panes;
As Youth's eidolon, too, the heart constrains,
Haunting these paths where we were wont to stray
Long years ago, ere all the gold turned grey—
Our youth has perished, yet Youth's ghost remains
In Surrey lanes.

ROSAMUND MARRIOTT WATSON.

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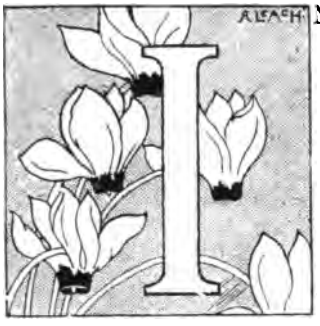
THE RED-HAIRED GIRL.

By S. BARING-GOULD.*



IN 1876 we took a house in one of the best streets and parts of B——. I do not give the name of the street or the number of the house, because the circumstances that occurred in that place were such as to make people nervous, and shy—unreasonably so—of taking those lodgings, after reading our experiences therein.

We were a small family—my husband, a grown-up daughter, and myself; and we had two maids—a cook, and the other was house and parlour maid in one. We had not been a fortnight in the house before my daughter said to me one morning: "Mamma, I do not like Jane"—that was our house-parlourmaid.

"Why so?" I asked. "She seems respectable, and she does her work systematically. I have no fault to find with her, none whatever."

"She may do her work," said Bessie, my daughter, "but I dislike inquisitiveness."

"Inquisitiveness!" I exclaimed. "What do you mean? Has she been looking in your drawers?"

"No, mamma, but she watches me. It is hot weather now, and when I am in my room, occasionally, I leave my door open whilst writing a letter, or doing any little bit of needlework, and then I am almost certain to hear her outside. If I turn sharply round, I see her slipping out of sight. It is most annoying. I really was unaware that I was such an interesting personage as to make it worth anyone's while to spy out my proceedings."

"Nonsense, my dear. You are sure it is Jane?"

"Well—I suppose so." There was a slight hesitation in her voice. "If not Jane, who can it be?"

"Are you sure it is not cook?"

"Oh, no, it is not cook; she is busy in the kitchen. I have heard her there, when I have gone outside my room upon the landing, after having caught that girl watching me."

"If you have caught her," said I, "I suppose you spoke to her about her impropriety."

"Well, caught is the wrong word. I have not actually *caught* her at it. Only to-day I distinctly heard her at my door, and I saw her back as she turned to run away, when I went towards her."

"But you followed her, of course?"

"Yes, but I did not find her on the landing when I got outside."

"Where was she, then?"

"I don't know."

"But did you not go and see?"

"She slipped away with astonishing celerity," said Bessie.

"I can take no steps in the matter. If she does it again, speak to her and remonstrate."

"But I never have a chance. She is gone in a moment."

"She cannot get away so quickly as all that."

"Somehow she does."

"And you are sure it is Jane?" again I asked; and again she replied: "If not Jane, who else can it be? There is no one else in the house."

So this unpleasant matter ended, for the time. The next intimation of something of the sort proceeded from another quarter—in fact, from Jane herself. She came to me some days later and said, with some embarrassment in her tone—

"If you please, ma'am, if I do not give satisfaction, I would rather leave the situation."

"Leave!" I exclaimed. "Why, I have not given you the slightest cause. I have not found fault with you for anything as yet, have I, Jane? On the contrary, I have been much pleased with the thoroughness of your work. And you are always tidy and obliging."

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"It isn't that, ma'am; but I don't like being watched whatever I do."

"Watched!" I repeated. "What do you mean? You surely do not suppose that I am running after you when you are engaged on your occupations. I assure you I have other and more important things to do."

"No, ma'am, I don't suppose you do."

"Then who watches you?"

"I think it must be Miss Bessie."

"Miss Bessie!" I could say no more, I was so astounded.

"Yes, ma'am. When I am sweeping out a room, and my back is turned, I hear her at the door; and when I turn myself about, I just catch a glimpse of her running away. I see her skirts——"

"Miss Bessie is above doing anything of the sort."

"If it is not Miss Bessie, who is it, ma'am?" There was a tone of indecision in her voice.

"My good Jane," said I, "set your mind at rest. Miss Bessie could not act as you suppose. Have you seen her on these occasions and assured yourself that it is she?"

"No, ma'am, I've not, so to speak, seen her face; but I know it ain't cook, and I'm sure it ain't you, ma'am, so who else can it be?"

I considered for some moments, and the maid stood before me in dubious mood.

"You say you saw her skirts. Did you recognise the gown? What did she wear?"

"It was a light cotton print—more like a maid's morning dress."

"Well, set your mind at ease; Miss Bessie has not got such a frock as you describe."

"I don't think she has," said Jane; "but there was someone at the door, watching me, who ran away when I turned myself about."

"Did she run upstairs or down?"

"I don't know. I did go out on the landing, but there was no one there. I'm sure it wasn't cook, for I heard her clattering the dishes down in the kitchen at the time."

"'She put her arm up and turned and ran downstairs.'"

"Well, Jane, there is some mystery in this. I will not accept your notice; we will let matters stand over till we can look into this complaint of yours and discover the rights of it."

"Thank you, ma'am. I'm very comfortable here, but it is unpleasant to suppose that one is not trusted, and is spied on wherever one goes and whatever one is about."

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A week later, after dinner one evening, when Bessie and I had quitted the table and left my husband to his smoke, Bessie said to me, when we were in the drawing-room together: "Mamma, it is not Jane."

"What is not Jane?" I asked.

"It is not Jane who watches me."

"Who can it be, then?"

"I don't know."

"And how is it that you are confident that you are not being observed by Jane?"

"Because I have seen her—that is to say, her head."

"When? where?"

"Whilst dressing for dinner. I was before the glass doing my hair, when I saw in the mirror someone behind me. I had only the two candles lighted on the table, and the room was otherwise dark. I thought I heard someone stirring—just the sort of stealthy step I have come to recognise as having troubled me so often. I did not turn, but looked steadily before me into the glass, and I could see reflected therein someone—a woman with red hair. Then I moved from my place quickly. I heard steps of some person hurrying away, but I saw no one then."

"The door was open?"

"No, it was shut."

"But where did she go?"

"I do not know, mamma. I looked everywhere in the room and could find no one. I have been quite upset. I cannot tell what to think of this. I feel utterly unhinged."

"I noticed at table that you did not appear well, but I said nothing about it. Your father gets so alarmed, and fidgets and fusses, if he thinks that there is anything the matter with you. But this is a most extraordinary story."

"It is an extraordinary fact," said Bessie.

"You have searched your room thoroughly?"

"I have looked into every corner."

"And there is no one there?"

"No one. Would you mind, mamma, sleeping with me to-night? I am so frightened. Do you think it can be a ghost?"

"Ghost? Fiddlesticks!"

I made some excuse to my husband and spent the night in Bessie's room. There was no disturbance that night of any sort, and although my daughter was excited and unable to sleep till long after midnight, she did fall into refreshing slumber at last, and in the morning said to me: "Mamma, I think I must have fancied that I saw something in the glass. I dare say my nerves were overwrought."

I was greatly relieved to hear this, and I came to much the same conclusion as did Bessie, but was again bewildered, and my mind unsettled by Jane, who came to me just before lunch, when I was alone, and said—

"Please, ma'am, it's only fair to say, but it's not Miss Bessie."

"What is not Miss Bessie? I mean, who is not Miss Bessie?"

"Her as is spying on me."

"I told you it could not be she. Who is it?"

"Please, ma'am, I don't know. It's a red-haired girl."

"But, Jane, be serious. There is no red-haired girl in the house."

"I know there ain't, ma'am. But for all that, she spies on me."

"Be reasonable, Jane," I said, disguising the shock her words produced on me. "If there be no red-haired girl in the house, how can you have one watching you?"

"I don't know; but one does."

"How do you know that she is red-haired?"

"Because I have seen her."

"When?"

"This morning."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, ma'am. I was going upstairs, when I heard steps coming softly after me—the back stairs, ma'am; they're rather dark and steep, and there's no carpet on them, as on the front stairs, and I was sure I heard someone following me; so I twisted about, thinking it might be cook, but it wasn't. I saw a young woman in a print dress, and the light as came from the window at the side fell on her head, and it was carrots—reg'lar carrots."

"Did you see her face?"

"No, ma'am; she put her arm up and turned and ran downstairs, and I went after her, but I never found her."

"You followed her—how far?"

"To the kitchen. Cook was there. And I said to cook, says I: 'Did you see a girl come this way?' And she said, short-like: 'No.'"

"And cook saw nothing at all?"

"Nothing. She didn't seem best pleased at my axing. I suppose I frightened her, as I'd been telling her about how I was followed and spied on."

I mused a moment only, and then said solemnly—

"Jane, what you want is a *pill*. You are

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suffering from hallucinations. I know a case very much like yours; and take my word for it that, in your condition of liver or digestion, a pill is a sovereign remedy. Set your mind at rest; this is a mere delusion, caused by pressure on the optic nerve. I will give you a pill to-night when you go to bed, another to-morrow, a third on the day after, and that will settle the red-haired girl. You will see no more of her."

"You think so, ma'am?"

"I am sure of it."

On consideration, I thought it as well to mention the matter to the cook, a strange, reserved woman, not given to talking, who did her work admirably, but whom, for some inexplicable reason, I did not like. If I had considered a little further as to how to broach the subject, I should perhaps have proved more successful; but by not doing so I rushed the question and obtained no satisfaction.

I had gone down to the kitchen to order dinner, and the difficult question had arisen how to dispose of the scraps from yesterday's joint.

"Rissoles, ma'am?"

"No," said I, "not rissoles. Your master objects to them."

"Then perhaps croquets?"

"They are only rissoles in disguise."

"Perhaps cottage pie?"

"No, that is inorganic rissole, a sort of protoplasm out of which rissoles are developed."

"Then, ma'am, I might make a hash."

"Not an ordinary, bare-faced, rudimentary hash."

"No, ma'am, with French mushrooms, or truffles, or tomatoes."

"Well — yes — perhaps. By the way, talking of tomatoes, who is that red-haired girl who has been about the house?"

"Can't say, ma'am."

I noticed at once that the eyes of the cook contracted, her lips tightened, and her face assumed a half-defiant, half-terrified look.

"You have not many friends in this place, have you, cook?"

"No, ma'am, none."

"Then who can she be?"

"Can't say, ma'am."

"You can throw no light on the matter? It is very unsatisfactory having a person about the house—and she has been seen upstairs—of whom one knows nothing."

"No doubt, ma'am."

"And you cannot enlighten me?"

"She is no friend of mine."

"Nor is she of Jane's. Jane spoke to me about her. Has she remarked concerning this girl to you?"

"Can't say, ma'am, as I notice all Jane says. She talks a good deal."

"You see, there must be someone who is a stranger and who has access to this house. It is most awkward."

"Very so, ma'am."

I could get nothing more from the cook. I might as well have talked to a log; and, indeed, her face assumed a wooden look as I continued to speak to her on the matter. So I sighed and said—

"Very well, hash with tomato," and went upstairs.

A few days later the house-parlourmaid remarked to me—

"Please, ma'am, may I have another pill?"

"Pill!" I exclaimed. "Why?"

"Because I have seen her again. She was behind the curtains, and I caught her putting out her red head to look at me."

"Did you see her face?"

"No; she up with her arm over it and scuttled away."

"This is strange. I do not think I have more than two podophyllin pills left in the box, but to those you are welcome. Only I should recommend a different treatment. Instead of taking them yourself, the moment you see, or fancy that you see, the red-haired girl, go at her with the box and threaten to administer the pills to her. That will rout her, if anything will."

"But she will not stop for the pills."

"The threat of having them forced on her every time she shows herself will disconcert her. Conceive, I am supposing, that on each occasion Miss Bessie, or I, were to meet you on the stairs, in a room, on the landing, in the hall, we were to rush on you and force, let us say, castor-oil globules between your lips. You would give notice at once."

"Yes; so I should, ma'am."

"Well, try this upon the red-haired girl. It will prove infallible."

"Thank you, ma'am; what you say seems reasonable."

Whether Bessie saw more of the puzzling apparition, I cannot say. She spoke no further on the matter to me; but that may have been so as to cause me no further uneasiness. I was unable to resolve the question to my own satisfaction—whether what had been seen was a real person, who obtained access to the house in some unaccountable manner, or whether it was, what I have called it, an apparition.

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As far as I could ascertain, nothing had been taken away. The movements of the red-haired girl were not those of one who sought to pilfer. They seemed to me rather those of one not in her right mind; and on this supposition I made inquiries in the neighbourhood as to the existence in our street, in any of the adjoining houses, of a person wanting in her wits, who was suffered to run about at will. But I could obtain no information that at all threw light on a point to me so perplexing.

Hitherto I had not mentioned the topic to my husband. I knew so well that I should obtain no help from him, that I made no effort to seek it. He would "Pish!" and "Pshaw!" and make some slighting reference to women's intellects, and not further trouble himself about the matter.

"'That red-haired girl rushed between me and the mirror.'"

But one day, to my great astonishment, he referred to it himself.

"Julia," said he, "do you observe how I have cut myself in shaving?"

"Yes, dear," I replied. "You have cotton wool sticking to your jaw, as if you were growing a white whisker on one side."

"It bled a great deal," said he.

"I am sorry to hear it."

"And I mopped up the blood with the new toilet-cover."

"Never!" I exclaimed. "You haven't been so foolish as to do that?"

"Yes. And that is just like you. You are much more concerned about your toilet-cover being stained than about my poor cheek which is gashed."

"You were very clumsy to do it," was all I could say. Married people are not always careful to preserve the amenities in private life. It is a pity, but it is so.

"It was due to no clumsiness on my part," said he; "though I do allow my nerves have been so shaken, broken, by married life, that I cannot always command my hand, as was the case when I was a bachelor. But this time it was due to that new, stupid, red-haired servant you have introduced into the house without consulting me or my pocket."

"Red-haired servant!" I echoed.

"Yes, that red-haired girl I have seen about. She thrusts herself into my study in a most offensive and objectionable way. But the climax of all was this morning, when I was shaving. I stood in my shirt before the glass, and had lathered my face, and was engaged on my right jaw, when that red-haired girl rushed between me and the mirror with both her elbows up, screening her face with her arms, and her head bowed. I started back, and in so doing cut myself."

"Where did she come from?"

"How can I tell? I did not expect to see anyone."

"Then where did she go?"

"I do not know; I was too concerned about my bleeding jaw to look about me. That girl must be dismissed."

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"I wish she could be dismissed," I said.

"What do you mean?"

I did not answer my husband, for I really did not know what answer to make.

I was now the only person in the house who had not seen the red-haired girl, except possibly the cook, from whom I could gather nothing, but whom I suspected of knowing more concerning this mysterious apparition than she chose to admit. That what had been seen by Bessie and Jane was a supernatural visitant, I now felt convinced, seeing that it had appeared to that least imaginative and most commonplace of all individuals, my husband. By no mental process could he have been got to imagine anything. He certainly did see this red-haired girl, and that no living, corporeal maid had been in his dressing-room at the time I was perfectly certain.

I was soon, however, myself to be included in the number of those before whose eyes she appeared. It was in this wise.

Cook had gone out to do some marketing. I was in the breakfast-room, when, wanting a funnel to fill a little phial of brandy I always keep on the washstand in case of emergencies, I went to the head of the kitchen stairs, to descend and fetch what I required. Then I was aware of a great clattering of the fire-irons below, and a banging about of the boiler and grate. I went down the steps very hastily and entered the kitchen.

There I saw a figure of a short-set girl in a shabby cotton gown, not over clean, and slipshod, stooping before the stove, and striking the fender with the iron poker. She had fiery red hair, very untidy.

I uttered an exclamation.

Instantly she dropped the poker, and covering her face with her arms, uttering a strange, low cry, she dashed round the kitchen table, making nearly the complete circuit, and then swept past me, and I heard her clattering up the kitchen stairs.

I was too much taken aback to follow. I stood as one petrified. I felt dazed and unable to trust either my eyes or my ears.

Something like a minute must have elapsed before I had sufficiently recovered to turn and leave the kitchen. Then I ascended slowly and, I confess, nervously. I was fearful lest I should find the red-haired girl cowering against the wall, and that I should have to pass her.

But nothing was to be seen. I reached the hall, and saw that no door was open from it except that of the breakfast-room. I entered and thoroughly examined every recess, corner, and conceivable hiding-place, but could find no one there. Then I ascended the staircase, with my hand on the balustrade, and searched all the rooms on the first floor, without the least success. Above were the servants' apartments, and I now resolved on mounting to them. Here the staircase was uncarpeted. As I was ascending, I heard Jane at work in her room. I then heard her come out hastily upon the landing. At the same moment, with a rush past me, uttering the same moan, went the red-haired girl. I am sure I felt her skirts sweep my dress. I did not notice her till she was close upon me, but I did distinctly see her as she passed. I turned, and saw no more.

I at once mounted to the landing where was Jane.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Please, ma'am, I've seen the red-haired girl again, and I did as you recommended. I went at her rattling the pill-box, and she turned and ran downstairs. Did you see her, ma'am, as you came up?"

"How inexplicable!" I said. I would not admit to Jane that I had seen the apparition.

The situation remained unaltered for a week. The mystery was unsolved. No fresh light had been thrown on it. I did not again see or hear anything out of the way; nor did my husband, I presume, for he made no further remarks relative to the extra servant who had caused him so much annoyance. I presume he supposed that I had summarily dismissed her. This I conjectured from a smugness assumed by his face, such as it always acquired when he had carried a point against me—which was not often.

However, one evening, abruptly, we had a new sensation. My husband, Bessie, and I were at dinner, and we were partaking of the soup, Jane standing by, waiting to change our plates and to remove the tureen, when we dropped our spoons, alarmed by fearful screams issuing from the kitchen. By the way, characteristically, my husband finished his soup before he laid down the spoon and said—

"Good gracious! What is that?"

Bessie, Jane, and I were by this time at the door, and we rushed together to the kitchen stairs, and one after the other ran down them. I was the first to enter, and I saw cook wrapped in flames, and a paraffin

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"I saw cook wrapped in flames."

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lamp on the floor broken, and the blazing oil flowing over it.

I had sufficient presence of mind to catch up the cocoanut matting which was not impregnated with the oil, and to throw it round cook, wrap her tightly in it, and force her down on the floor where not overflowed by the oil. I held her thus, and Bessie succoured me. Jane was too frightened to do other than scream. The cries of the burnt woman were terrible. Presently my husband appeared.

"Dear me! Bless me! Good gracious!" he said.

"You go away and fetch a doctor," I called to him; "you can be of no possible service here—you only get in our way."

"But the dinner?"

"Bother the dinner! Run for a surgeon."

In a little while we had removed the poor woman to her room, she shrieking the whole way upstairs; and, when there, we laid her on her bed, and kept her folded in the cocoanut matting till a medical man arrived, in spite of her struggles to be free. My husband, on this occasion, acted with commendable promptness; but whether because he was impatient for the completion of his meal, or whether his sluggish nature was for once touched with human sympathy, it is not for me to say.

All I know is that, so soon as the surgeon was there, I dismissed Jane with "There, go and get your master the rest of his dinner, and leave us with cook."

The poor creature was frightfully burnt. She was attended to devotedly by myself and Bessie, till a nurse was obtained from the hospital. For hours she was as one mad with terror as much as with pain.

Next day she was quieter and sent for me. I hastened to her, and she begged the nurse to leave the room. I took a chair and seated myself by her bedside, and expressed my profound commiseration, and told her that I should like to know how the accident had taken place.

"Ma'am, it was the red-haired girl did it."

"The red-haired girl!"

"Yes, ma'am. I took a lamp to see how the fish was getting on, and all at once I saw her rush straight at me, and I—I backed, thinking she would knock me down, and the lamp fell over and smashed, and my clothes caught, and——"

"Oh, cook! you should not have taken the lamp."

"It's done. And she would never leave me alone till she had burnt or scalded me. You needn't be afraid—she don't haunt the house. It is *me* she has haunted, because of what I did to her."

"Then you know her?"

"She was in service with me, as kitchen-maid, at my last place, near Cambridge. I took a sort of hate against her, she was such a slattern and so inquisitive. She peeped into my letters, and turned out my box and drawers, she was ever prying; and when I spoke to her, she was that saucy! I reg'lar hated her. And one day she was kneeling by the stove, and I was there, too, and I suppose the devil possessed me, for I upset the boiler as was on the hot-plate right upon her, just as she looked up, and it poured over her face, and bosom, and arms, and scalded her that dreadful, she died. And since then she has haunted me. But she'll do so no more. She won't trouble you further. She has done for me, as she has always minded to do, since I scalded her to death."

The unhappy woman did not recover.

"Dear me! no hope?" said my husband, when informed that the surgeon despaired of her. "And good cooks are so scarce. By the way, that red-haired girl?"

"Gone—gone for ever," I said.

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THE EXPLANATION.

MR. MISSINGEM JONES (in an effort to make Donald more sociable): The birds are very tame here this year, Donald?
DONALD: Aye—I'm thinkin' they'll be auld birds, that'll hae seen ye afore.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

MORE WORK FOR INVENTORS.

WITH wireless telegraphy to stimulate the mind,
We ought to set to work at once, nor rest until we find
A lot of undiscovered things to amplify our joy
And do away with many cares that bother and annoy.

A trackless railway route would save a mountain of expense,
A boatless line of steamships, too, would surely prove immense;
And let some mind evolve for us a go-less kind of go,
So we can travel 'round the world yet stay at home, you know.

And since it costs so much to live we scarce can save a cent,
A foodless dinner is the thing some genius should invent;
And, after that, if we would have existence truly cheap,
Some grand philanthropist should make a bed-less kind of sleep.

To-day the trouble is that things are as they have to be,
Whereas we'd rather have them as we'd rather have them; see?
(These verses seem so tangled that the author here explains
It's all because they're fashioned from a brainless kind of brains.)

Nixon Waterman.

JELLIKINS: You had a lady with you in your motor this afternoon.
SLYKER: Yes, my wife's mother.
JELLIKINS: Wha-at?
SLYKER: Well, one never knows when an accident may happen.

HE: I never argue with a woman. In the first place, it's a bore; and then, again, it never does any good.
SHE: Ah! but you forget how much joy it gives to the woman.

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RATHER A SHOCK FOR MOTHER.

TOMMY: And I shall always call him *Scanty* Claus, not Santa Claus, because he only put a mechanical duck and a penny watch in my stocking!

THE METROPOLIS.

"LONDON at last!" exclaimed a burly, red-faced man as the train steamed into Euston Station.

"London at last!" repeated his four fresh-faced daughters, the Ladies Florence, Anne, Ethelreda, and Angela in tones of pleased anticipation.

Lord Camford eagerly scanned the seething crowd, to the human items of which he formed a striking contrast, and at last his eye lighted on a half familiar face.

"Monty!" he cried.

His friend, an elderly dandy, looked up with a flush that might have come of unexpected pleasure.

"Here we are, you see!" exclaimed Lord Camford, cheerily alighting. "Up for the season in town, to do the balls, the Opera, the Row, and all the rest of it. By Jove! it's years since I was in the old place. I haven't set my foot in Piccadilly since 1903."

A half-curious, half-amused crowd had collected round the group, and the friend with a hesitating accent, as though he were speaking in an unfamiliar tongue, whispered—

"Must you talk in English?"

"Can't speak a word of anything else. Ha! ha! But what the deuce——?"

"Oh! it is nothing," replied the friend uneasily.

"Isn't it? I thought you looked funny," said the new arrival. "Now, we are going to stay at a hotel for a day or two, while we look for a house. You shall be our *cicerone*—there's French, or whatever it is, for you. You used to know your London, Monty."

"I do now," answered the friend with some hauteur.

"Well, how about Park Lane?"

"You could hardly expect to get a house in the Jewish quarter," said the friend impatiently.

"The Jewish quarter?"

"Yes; that part of Mayfair forms part of the Jewish quarter. The other is about divided between the Russians and the French?"

"The deuce it is! Well, Belgrave Square?"

"Why will you hit upon the Jewish quarter?"

"Oh! that's the Jewish quarter again, is it?"

"Yes, and the Cadogan estate is exclusively German from Knightsbridge to the Königstrasse."

"The what?"

"The Königstrasse—King's Road it used to be, I think."

"Well, I'm hanged! Let me see. There is Hyde Park Terrace and the district about there. We might put up with that."

A smile of amusement came over the friend's face.

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"The Greek colony are rather touchy about admitting foreigners. Of course, it may be only peninsular prejudice; but there it is."

"Foreigners!"

"Well, you are very English, you must admit. It would be no good calling yourself Camfordopoulos or Camfordstein, as people do nowadays. Your face would give you away."

"Give me away? I tell you I'm an Englishman and I'm proud of it."

"'Sh!" said the friend warningly, for the crowd had assumed a threatening aspect. "The inhabitants naturally resent such language."

"Well, where on earth, or rather in London, am I to live? Bloomsbury?"

"If you choose to be alone among the Italians."

"Then I give it up," and Lord Camford turned despairingly to his daughters, in whose eyes tears were rapidly gathering.

"There's Brixton," suggested the friend.

"Brixton!" exclaimed the fourteenth Earl of Camford.

"Yes; most of the English aristocracy—I don't use the term as one of abuse—live there now. It is still quite British. They have an English chaplain and an English library, and till quite recently they had an English club."

"But I can't take the girls to balls from Brixton," said the proud father, looking at the four disconsolate faces.

"Balls! Well, hardly," replied the friend, looking at the figures beside him with some curiosity. "Of course, the people of the district have their amusements. Their friends come in to tea, and sometimes stay on to supper. Occasionally a girl, who is clever and amusing, speaks Yiddish well and is not too aboriginal in appearance, is taken up by one of the leaders in Mayfair society; but as a rule, the new recruits come from the American colony in the Hampstead district. Perhaps these young ladies—but where are you going?"

The question, however, remained unanswered, for the burly earl and his four tall daughters were already halfway up the departure platform.

Harold White.

YOUNG LADY (who has entered second-rate restaurant): Black coffee, please.

VERY NEW WAITER: Sorry, miss, we've only got the ordinary brown.

THE DUCAL LANDLORD: Well, Mrs. Nolan, and how are you?

MRS. NOLAN (who has been carefully instructed by the steward to say "Your Grace" upon the arrival of her visitor): For what I am about to receive, Heaven make me truly thankful!

KNOX: Why do you always put "Dictated" at the bottom of your letters? You have no stenographer.

KNIX: Well, you see, I'm a very poor speller.

THE FARMER: It's colder to-day.

HIS DAUGHTER: The thermometer says not, pa.

THE FARMER: Well, you kin go by the thermometer if you wanter, but I guess I know how I feel, without any machine to tell me.

TED: Hallo, Fred! I thought your doctor had stopped your smoking and drinking entirely?

FRED: Oh! I made that all right—I changed my doctor.

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SOON EXPLAINED.

MRS. BROWN: Mabel, did you refuse Captain Binks yesterday? He seemed awfully cut up about something. Looked as if the very iron had entered his soul.
TOMMY: No, mummy, it wasn't really iron; it was only a tin tack I'd put in his chair.

"LET me take the blamed thing home," said the patient, as the dentist relieved him of his aching molar. "I want to take it home and poke sugar in it to see it ache!"

PRELIMINARIES.

MRS. BINGO: Did this package come for me to-day?

BINGO: Yes. Here it is. Seems to me that it's pretty big for that new skirt you ordered.

MRS. BINGO: Mercy, no! it isn't the skirt. It's only the samples.

"HAVE you any friends in this city?" asked the manager of the bank.

"No," he replied; "I'm a football umpire."

BARBER: They have captured the cleverest hotel robber in the country.

MR. STUBBS: Indeed! Which hotel did he keep?

FRIEND: Was it a serious accident?

MOTORIST: Oh, no. There were three people killed, but the motor was not even scratched.

ETHEL: So Arthur proposed last night?

MAUDE: Yes.

ETHEL: And did you accept him?

MAUDE: I was so awfully excited, I don't know whether I did or not. If he comes to-night, I did; and if he doesn't, I didn't.

PROBBS: So you were in the Iowa cyclone. At what point did the storm leave the town?

DOBBS: It didn't leave the town—it just took it along.

A BROKEN CONTRACT.

"OF course, my dear," said the old lady, "I shall be sorry to lose you; but if you insist on going, I have nothing more to say."

"Exactly," replied the companion.

"Though I must confess," continued the old lady, "that I should like to know your reasons. I have done my best to keep awake in the evenings. The books we now have from the library are your unfettered choice. The substitution of a motor-car for the carriage and pair was in accordance with your wishes. If there is anything else——"

"No, I think not," answered the girl. "I have no complaint to make of the material conditions of my occupation; but woman cannot live on the fat of the land alone. I consider that I have been deceived!"

"Indeed, my dear! and how?" asked the old lady with surprised solicitude.

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CHRISTMAS AT SEA: A PASTIME IN NORTHERN LATITUDES.

"Be seated and I will explain," and the companion motioned her to the next best armchair.

"I cannot attach the least blame to myself. I have adopted throughout the air of shyness, simplicity, and *insouciance*, which has always been considered essential to the part. My *coiffure* looks like a demure attempt to tame rebellious curls into an unnoticeable smoothness. When a man speaks to me, my eyes have been upturned in innocent wonder or cast down in modest diffidence. I may as well tell you also that my real name is not Desmond."

"Ah, well, my dear! many people's aren't," said the old lady consolingly.

"But it should have been for the part, and I have not neglected details. Well, in spite of all, what happened?"

"What?"

"When I arrived at the station and stood in my skimpy dress beside my modest luggage, was

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I met by a tall, dark nephew of yours called Brian, in a high dog-cart? Not a bit of it. The fact that his name was not Brian I could have overlooked; but he was not there at all!"

"My dear, I sent the carriage for you," said the old lady nervously.

"Exactly. Only it should have been your nephew surly at having to fetch 'only the companion,' and silent during the long drive to the house. I need hardly say that later on—but there, he never came."

"But I haven't a nephew."

"I fulfilled the requirements of a companion; you should have had the necessary equipment of an employer. Then did all the surrounding baronets call?"

"Really, my dear, I don't believe they did," replied the old lady.

"Did they insist upon sending round horses, dogs, and hothouse grapes for me, while I wondered shyly why? Were they stupid and rude to each other, so that they made me quite unhappy and afraid? You cannot truly say they were."

The old lady strove to protest in vain that these things had been.

"Then, when I went to church, was the whole place full of flustered young men? You know that it was not. When the thunderstorm came on, and I had left my umbrella at home in the regulation manner, did anyone dash forward to see me to the gate? Not a soul except the vicar, who has seven children."

The old lady could only glance guiltily away.

"When I went to the county ball in a twopenny-halfpenny muslin frock, did I monopolise the young men from the barracks, and turn to envy all the heiresses in their Paquin ball-dresses? It is useless to make out I did. No one took the slightest notice of me except the doctor's assistant. Is there a single peer of the realm who is pestering me with his attentions? It is idle to pretend there is."

"I don't, my dear, I don't," protested the old lady.

"And, therefore, as nothing has turned out as it obviously should, the only course that is left me is to go."

The old lady had reluctantly to acquiesce.

THE SOFT ANSWER.

IRATE TRAVELLER: Hi! you fool! why didn't you put my luggage in?

PORTER: The luggage is none such a fool as yourself—you're in the wrong train.

THE BEST PLACE.

MRS. SLIM: I've been looking over one of them flats, but I don't like 'em at all; their ain't no bath.

MRS. POUNDS: What do yer want a bath for?

MRS. SLIM: Well, where am I going to put the *coal?*

"SIR, I am poor, but I am honest."

"Well, become rich and remain honest, and you can get a job in a museum."

JONES (who has walked out of a second storey window in his sleep): Oh, dear! I hope my automobile isn't hurt!

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THE GALLANTS' AMBUSH.

By Hal Hurst, R.I.

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SEÑOR PEÑA PAINTING IN HIS STUDIO.

A SPANISH PORTRAIT-PAINTER

AND SOME SUBJECT PICTURES.

By S. R. Lewison.

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WE sat in the public gardens that skirt the Museo del Prado, and saw Madrid's rank and fashion driving or walking before us. The capital was very full, and meetings of the Cabinet had brought all the ministers to town. I had caught a glimpse of Spain's Kitchener, General Valeriano Weyler, Marquis of Tenerife, a short, fierce, grey man with truly Spanish whiskers. I had also seen the Queen-Mother, looking in better health and more at her ease than she seemed to be in days when King Alfonso had yet to attain his majority, and all the late Señor Sagasta's political genius was required to hold the dynasty together. Between the heavily blazoned carriages and our seat on the path went very many charming women. Spain is surely the home of women who arrest the eye, and the capital is as well supplied as Sevilla, Cordova, Malaga, or any of the other Spanish towns I have visited. They walked delightfully, as if they realised that walking is a fine art; they wore their clothes with distinction, and many retained the *mantilla* in spite of the growing popularity of the hat or bonnet from Paris.

"Who paints them nowadays?" I asked my companion.

"They are not painted," he replied rather regretfully: "or, if they are, they do not seem to be treated on purely Spanish lines. We have lost Goya these hundred years, and had no great artist since he passed."

"I know you have no Goya in Madrid to-day," I said. "I know that the *maja* died with him. But there must be men who, if they cannot preserve what is purely Spanish in the types around us, preserve what is really pretty; and their work would be worth seeing."

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My companion protested, declaring Fortuny was the last Spanish painter, if there had been one after Goya.

"Granting that Fortuny was the last really Spanish painter; that Carbonero, who might do truly Spanish work, turns to ancient history or legend; and that Pradilla does the same," I went on, "I am sure that the girls of Madrid must have their painter, and that you must know who he is."

He thought for a moment.

"There is Peña," he said—"Señor Don Maximo Peña y Muñoz, to give him his full name. Come and see his pictures, if you like. I know him well. He is sure to be hard at work in his studio, but he will spare an hour for a chat, and he is always surrounded by pretty work."

So we left the gay crowd and the pleasant, shaded gardens, and returned to the hot pavements of the town, to travel through a few streets to a large house let out in floors, according to the common custom of the Continent. At the top floor we rang the bell, and the painter himself came to the door in a white blouse, with palette on his thumb, and gave us a hearty welcome. Through two rooms, whose walls were covered with studies in every medium and of every style—landscape, figure, still life—in crayon, pastel, oil, and water-colour, we reached the studio itself, a very large and well-lighted room, crowded with the artist's work. In the centre of the room, on an easel, stood a large, unfinished picture, from which Señor Peña had turned, he told us, an hour before, on the arrival of a pupil who was busy with some black-and-white work in the corner. While my companion chatted with the artist, I went slowly round the room, at his suggestion, examining the work that hung upon the walls. The drawing, though correct, was very conventional; the composition of much of the work was clever—rather dangerously clever, in so far as it suggested accomplishment without excess of effort—but the colour was the most impressive quality of the artist's work. Spain is a country of strong, effective colouring; the pageants associated with national life, of which the bull-fight may stand for an example, are all highly coloured, and a Spanish artist often handles primary colours with a daring that would be impossible in our foggy homeland. Señor Peña's subject-pictures were all light and bright, even when they appeared to receive their inspiration from the Dutch School, which is obviously remote from Spain and far more sober in colouring; while in his portraits he had clearly gone as far as colour would permit. As the strong afternoon light flooded the studio, the painter's feeling

"COQUETRY." BY MAXIMO PEÑA.

"ELECTRA." BY MAXIMO PEÑA.

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"BLOSSOMS." BY MAXIMO PEÑA.

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seemed justified by the atmosphere he worked in. Clearly he had made many experiments, and had tried many forms of work, to return at last to the study of the fair sex, painting it in rich apparel and strong light, but always seeing his subjects more clearly as pretty women than as Spaniards. They might have been Italian, they might have been French —there was no more attempt to preserve or emphasise purely national characteristics than if the artist had not been aware of any; but they were all gay, smiling, happy, and well dressed.

Señor Peña joined me, and I finished my tour of inspection in his company. He is a bright, pleasant speaker and an observant man, clearly a rapid worker and an industrious one, quite enamoured of his art. I explained that I had been anxious to find the studio where all the prettiness that passed in the streets below found its interpretation, where the surface brightness of the women's faces was recorded, and I asked the artist if he were himself a Madrileño.

"No," he replied. "I love Madrid, but I am not a native. I came from Salduero, in the province of Soria, where I made my first appearance forty years ago. I only journeyed to Madrid when I had decided to take up art as my profession, and before that time I had travelled in South America and seen something of the world, though I was in business and consequently had but a restricted liberty.

"A STUDY." BY MAXIMO PEÑA.

"My uncles traded with Buenos Ayres," he went on thoughtfully, in the intervals of a cigarette, "and when schooldays were over I was put in their charge, and they sent me to Brazil. It was there that the desire to take up painting overmastered me, to the exclusion of all business. The country is almost more full of light and colour than Spain. I found myself attracted by art in all its aspects. I started to work. I used pen and pencil as well as palette and brush, and, not without difficulty, I persuaded my uncles, who were also my guardians, to free me from the house of bondage and give me a chance to do the work I liked best. When their minds were made up, they were very good, and sent me to this city to study in the Academy of Arts, where I learned how little I knew and what a lot there was to learn. But the chance of studying was what I had scarcely dared to hope for, and I stuck so closely to my work that I received honourable mention in several departments. At that time I was feeling my way, fascinated by many forms of work, and quite unable to settle in my own mind the special direction I ought to follow."

This uncertainty was shown unmistakably on the studio's walls. The artist's gift is appreciative rather than creative, and many a style and medium had made him its servant for a time at least.

"From the Academy," continued the painter, "I went to the studio of Señor

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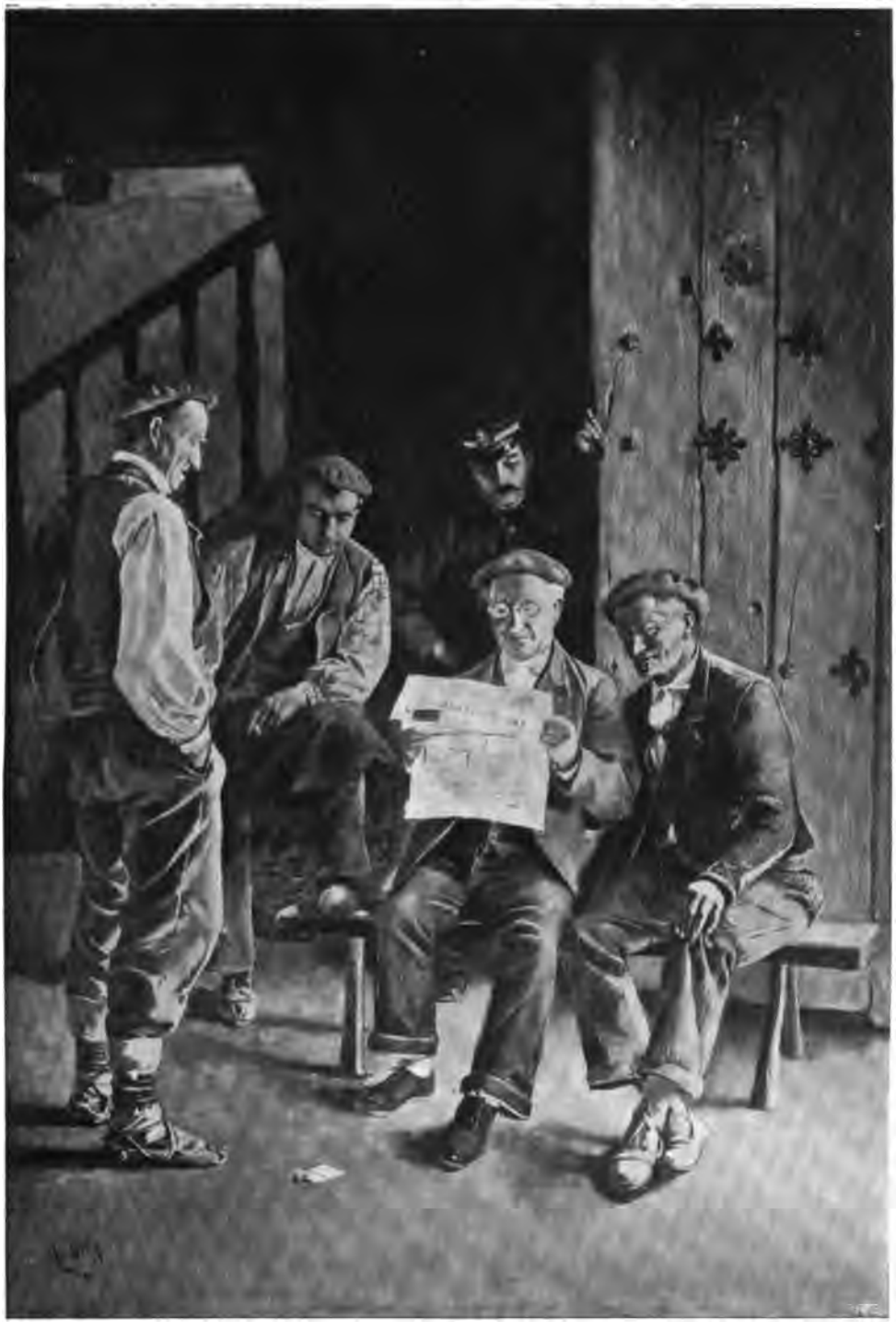

"POLITICS." BY MAXIMO PEÑA.

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"THE LOVERS OF TERUEL." BY A. M. DEGRAIN.

A poor lad of Teruel, in the north of Spain, fell in love with a rich and beautiful girl. To win her, he left for America to make his fortune (in 1600 A.D.), promising to return. On his return, he heard she was being married to a wealthy suitor by her father's order. He rushed to the church, too late to stop the ceremony; and when he and the girl saw one another, they embraced and, overcome with grief, died. This is a true story, preserved in the archives of Teruel. Reproduced by permission of Messrs. Myers and Rogers, 59, High Holborn, sole English agents for the Madrid publishers, Romo and Füssel.

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Plasencia, and from there I gained a travelling scholarship that enabled me to go to Rome, where I worked for three years. You know that most Spanish artists go to Rome. While I was there, I sent my first big picture to the Spanish Academy. It was the 'Letter from the Absent Son,' and the Academy gave it a prize. I attach great value to the study in Rome."

Strange, I thought, that Madrid still looks to Rome for artistic inspiration at a time when modern Italian art is at a very low ebb, and Rome is no more capable of producing masterpieces than Madrid. From the glimpses I have caught of student life in Rome, I think the young Spaniards, who have their own circle there, like it most for the social side; certainly it does no good at all to their work. If Spain has very few truly Spanish painters to-day, it is because her artists seek Rome and her upper classes get their clothes from

"A MADRID GIRL." BY MAXIMO PEÑA.

"BETWEEN THE CURTAINS." BY MAXIMO PEÑA.

Paris; while the lower classes ape the upper ones, and cheerfully sacrifice the attire, and with it the customs, that made them at once picturesque and distinct from the rank and file of Europe. I could not help feeling that had Señor Peña given his accurate attention and ready hand to the study of the types still left to Spain, he might have kept the colour and prettiness in which he delights, without sacrifice of nationality. But it is hardly fair to expect a man who has been brought up in certain surroundings to realise their quality; and with the decline of the Roman Catholic influence over the more vigorous intellects of Spain there has been an accompanying revolt against the gloomy and ascetic conventions of the earlier Spanish masters, whose Agonies and Crucifixions are in every cathedral, museum, and hospital throughout the more important cities of the kingdom.

Where modern Spanish artists do seek inspiration from stories and legends of their native land, they go so far back that they miss the long period in which the native costume has its special characteristics. I had seen three framed photos of pictures in my companion's study, all done by modern Spanish artists, all dramatic in subject, and yet leaving the observer without a suggestion of what is truly Spanish in Spain. The first picture was Muñoz Degrain's well-known "Lovers of Teruel," illustrating a story still preserved in the archives of the old city.

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"THE BATTLE OF OTUMBA." BY M. RAMIREZ.

An incident in the war wherein Spain conquered Mexico. Herman Cortes is presented at the head of the Spanish troops. Reproduced by permission of Messrs. Myers and Rogers, 59, High Holborn, sole English agents for the Madrid publishers, Romo and Füssel.

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"THE LAST DAY OF THE SIEGE OF NUMANTIA." BY A. VEGA.

Numantia, capital of the Revaci, a powerful Celtiberian tribe, held out for many years against the Romans (141–133 B.C.), about the time of the third Punic war, and was finally reduced by the younger Scipio. The last defenders killed themselves rather than fall into the conquerors' hands. By permission of Messrs. Myers and Rogers, 59, High Holborn, sole English agents for the Madrid publishers, Romo and Füssel.

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Teruel is in the north of Spain, and one of its youngest citizens, being in love with a rich and beautiful girl, went to America to make the fortune by which he hoped to claim her. He returned rich, to hear she was being married to a wealthy suitor by her father's wish, and, rushing to the church, found himself too late to stop the marriage. But when the bride saw her true lover, she rushed to his arms, embraced him, and then the two lovers died, overcome by their great grief.

The second picture showed the end of the siege of Numantia, by Scipio Africanus, when the women left in the city at the end of its eight years' investment killed themselves rather than fall into the hands of their conquerors. Probably Señor Vega, who painted the picture, was moved to do so by the tragedy Cervantes wrote round the story. The third picture, by Señor Ramirez, showed Herman Cortes at the head of the Spanish troops in the Mexican war.

"FLOWERS FROM THE FIELD." BY MAXIMO PEÑA.

I suppose that Degrain, Ramirez, and Vega studied in Rome, and came away from there without the old interest in purely Spanish types and life, and yet there is quite enough of the old life, if artists would only look for it, to make Spanish painters quite as interesting as their brethren of the Low Countries.

"When my work

"SPINNERS OF NAVARRE." BY MAXIMO PEÑA.

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"A LETTER FROM THE ABSENT SON." BY MAXIMO PEÑA.

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"A LANDSCAPE." BY MAXIMO PEÑA.

in Rome was at an end," continued Señor Peña, "I came back to Madrid and settled down again to hard work. My pictures were seen in the National Exhibition, which awarded me the third and the second medal, and my painting, 'Boca y Bocadilla,' took the second prize."

We continued our stroll, and I noted some cleverly drawn studies in crayon. "I am always studying drawing," he said, "and work a great deal from the model. My favourite work is portrait-painting in pastel. I cannot face the summer in the city. I go to Picos de Europa, in Santander, and work at landscape painting. But portrait-painting pleases me more than any other form of art, and I devote myself to it more and more, to the exclusion of all the other work I have tried from time to time. One must have a special attachment in art, though when there are no portraits to paint in the country, I am pleased enough to return to landscape."

In the course of my visit, nothing more was said to throw light upon the painter's history and methods of work. The pictures explain themselves; attractive after their kind, cleverly handled, and unavoidably losing, in our present reproductions, the large measure of charm that comes from a skilful, almost an audacious, colouring.

SEÑOR PEÑA AT HOME.

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"THEIR LAWFUL OCCASIONS."

By RUDYARD KIPLING.*

PART II.

BUT for the small detail that I was a passenger and a civilian, and might not alter her course, torpedo-boat No. 267 was mine to me all that priceless day. Moorshed, after breakfast—frizzled ham and a devil that Pyecroft made out of sardines, anchovies and French mustard smashed together with a spanner—showed me his few and simple navigating tools and took an observation. Morgan, the signaller, let me hold the chamois leathers while he cleaned the searchlight (we seemed to be better equipped with electricity than the rest of our type) that lived under a bulbous umbrella-cover amidships. Then Pyecroft and Morgan, standing easy, talked together of the King's Service as reformers and revolutionists, so notably that were I not engaged on this tale, I would for its conclusion substitute theirs.

I would speak of Hinchcliffe—Henry Salt Hinchcliffe, first-class engine-room artificer, and genius in his line, who was prouder of having taken part in the Hat Crusade in his youth than of all his daring, his skill, and his nickel-steel nerve. I consorted with him for an hour in the packed and dancing engine-room, when Moorshed suggested "whacking her up" to eighteen knots, to see if she would stand it. The floor was ankle-deep in a creamy batter of oil and water; each moving part flicking more oil in zoetrope circles, and the gauges invisible for their dizzy chattering on the chattering steel bulkhead. Leading stoker Grant, said to be a bigamist, an ox-eyed man smothered in hair, took me to the stokehold and planted me between a scaring white furnace and some hell-hot iron plate for fifteen minutes, while I listened to the drone of fans and the worry of the sea without, striving to wrench all that palpitating fire-pot wide open.

Then I came on deck and watched Moorshed—revolving in his orbit from the canvas bustle and torpedo-tubes aft, by way of engine-room, tower and wheel, to the doll's house of a foc'sle—learned in experiences withheld from me, moved by laws beyond my knowledge, authoritative, entirely adequate, and yet, in heart, a child at his play. *I* could not take ten steps along the crowded deck but I collided with some body or thing, whereas he and his satellites swung, passed, and returned on their vocations with the freedom and spaciousness of the well-poised stars.

Even now I can at will recall every tone and gesture, with each dissolving picture inboard or over-side—Hinchcliffe's white arm buried to the shoulder in a hornet's nest of spinning machinery—Moorshed's halt and jerk to windward as he looked across the water; Pyecroft's back bent over the Berthon collapsible boat, while he drilled three men in expanding it swiftly—the outflung white water at the foot of a homeward-bound Chinaman not a hundred yards away—and her shadow-slashed, rope-purfled sails bulging sideways like insolent cheeks; the ribbed and pitted coal-dust on our decks, all iridescent under the sun; the first filmy haze that paled the shadows of our funnels about lunch-time; the gradual die-down and dulling over of the short, cheery seas; the set that changed to a swell; the swell that crumbled up and ran allwhither oilily; the triumphant, almost audible roll-inward of wandering fog-walls that had been stalking us for two hours and—welt upon welt, chill as the grave—the drive of the interminable main fog of the Atlantic. We slowed to little more than steerage-way and lay listening. Presently a hand-bellows fog-horn jarred like a corn-crake, and there rattled out of the mist a big ship literally above us. We could count the rivets in her plates as we scrooped by, and the little drops of dew gathered below them.

"Wonder why they're always barques—always steel—always four-masted—an' never less than two thousand tons. But they are," said Pyecroft. He was out on the turtle-backed bows of her; Moorshed was at the wheel, and another man worked the whistle.

"This fog is the best thing could ha' happened to us," said Moorshed. "It gives us our chance to run in on the quiet . . . Hal-lo!"

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A cracked bell rang. Clean and sharp (beautifully grained, too), a bowsprit surged over our starboard bow, the bobstay confidentially hooking itself into our forward rail.

I saw Pyecroft's arm fly up; heard at the same moment the severing of the tense rope, the working of the wheel, Moorshed's voice down the tube saying: "Astern a little, please, Mr. Hinchcliffe!" and Pyecroft's cry, "Trawler with her nets down! Look out for our propeller, sir, or we'll be wrapped up in 'em!"

267 surged quickly under my feet, as the pressure of the downward-bearing bobstay was removed. Half-a-dozen men of the foc'sle had already thrown out fenders, and stood by to bear off a just visible bulwark.

Still going astern, we touched slowly, broadside on, to a suggestive crunching of fenders, and I looked into the deck of a Brixham trawler, her crew struck dumb.

"Any luck?" said Moorshed politely.

"Not till we met yeou," was the answer. "The Lard he saved us from they big ships to be spitted by the little wan. Where be 'e gwine tu with our fine new bobstay?"

"Yah! You've 'ad time to splice it by now," said Pyecroft with contempt.

"Aie; but we'm all crushed to port like aigs. You was runnin' twenty-seven knots, us reckoned it. Didn't us, Albert?"

"Liker twenty-nine, an' niver no whistle."

"Yes, we always do that. Do you want a tow to Brixham?" said Moorshed.

A great silence fell upon those wet men of the sea. We lifted a little towards their side, but our silent, quick-breathing crew, braced and strained outboard, bore us off as though we had been a mere picket-boat.

"What for?" said a puzzled voice.

"For love; for nothing. You'll be abed in Brixham by midnight."

"Yiss; but trawl's down."

"No hurry. I'll pass you a line and go ahead. Sing out when you're ready." A rope smacked on their deck with the word; they made it fast; we slid forward, and in ten seconds saw nothing save a few feet of the wire rope running into fog over our stern; but we heard the noise of debate.

"Catch a Brixham trawler letting go of a free tow in a fog," said Moorshed, listening.

"But what, under Heaven, do you want him for?" I asked.

"Oh, he'll come in handy later."

"Was that your first collision?"

"Yes."

I shook hands with him in silence, and our tow hailed us.

"Aie! yeou little man-o'-war!" The voice rose muffled and wailing. "After us've upped trawl, us'll be glad of a tow. Leave line just slack abaout as 'tis now, and kip a good fine look-out be'ind 'ee."

"There's an accommodatin' blighter for you!" said Pyecroft. "Where does he expect we'll be, with these currents evolutin' like sailormen at the Agricultural Hall?"

I left the bridge to watch the wire-rope at the stern as it drew out and smacked down upon the water. By what instinct or guidance 267 kept it from fouling her languidly flapping propeller, I cannot tell. The fog now thickened and thinned in streaks that bothered the eyes like the glare of intermittent flash-lamps; by turns granting us the vision of a sick sun that leered and fled, or burying all a thousand fathom deep in gulfs of vapours. At no time could we see the trawler, though we heard the click of her windlass, the jar of her trawl-beam, and the very flap of the fish on her deck. Forward was Pyecroft with the lead; on the bridge Moorshed pawed a Channel chart; aft sat I, listening to the whole of the British Mercantile Marine (never a keel less) returning to England, and watching the fog-dew run round the bight of the tow back to its mother-fog.

"Aie! yeou little man-o'-war! We'm done with trawl. You can take us home if you know the road."

"Right O!" said Moorshed. "We'll give the fishmonger a run for his money. Whack her up, Mr. Hinchcliffe."

The next few hours completed my education. I saw that I ought to be afraid, but more clearly (this was when a liner hooted down the back of my neck) that any fear which would begin to do justice to the situation would, if yielded to, incapacitate me for the rest of my days. A shadow of spread sails, deeper than the darkening twilight, brooding over us like the wings of Azrael (Pyecroft said she was a Swede), and, miraculously withdrawn, persuaded me that there was a working chance that I should reach the beach—any beach—alive, if not dry; and (this was when an economical tramp laved our port rail with her condenser-water) were I so spared, I vowed I would tell my tale worthily.

Thus we floated in space as souls drift through raw time. Night added herself to the fog, and I laid hold on my limbs jealously, lest they, too, should melt in the general dissolution.

"Where's that prevaricatin' fishmonger?"

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"'Any luck?' said Moorshed politely."

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said Pyecroft, turning a lantern on a scant yard of the gleaming wire-rope that pointed like a stick to my left. "He's doin' some fancy steerin' on his own. No wonder Mr. Hinchcliffe is blasphemious. The tow's sheered off to starboard. sir. He'll fair pull the stern out of us."

Moorshed, invisible, cursed through the megaphone into invisibility.

"Aie! yeou little man-o'-war!" The voice butted through the fog with the monotonous insistence of a strayed sheep's. "We don't all like the road yeou'm takin'. 'Tis no road to Brixham. You'll be buckled up under Prawle Point by'm-bye."

"Do you pretend to know where you are?" the megaphone roared.

"Iss, I reckon; but there's no pretence tu me!"

"Oh, Peter!" said Pyecroft. "Let's 'ang 'im at 'is own blighted gaff."

"A white-whiskered man in a frock-coat."

I could not see what followed, but Moorshed said: "Take another man with you. If you lose the tow, you're done. I'll slow her down."

I heard the dinghy splash overboard ere I could cry "Murder!" Heard the rasp of a boat-hook along the wire-rope, and then, as it had been in my ear, Pyecroft's enormous and jubilant bellow astern: "Why, he's here! Right atop of us! The blighter 'as pouched 'alf the tow, like a shark!" A long pause filled with soft Devonian bleatings. Then Pyecroft, *solo arpeggio*: "Rum? Rum? Rum? Is that all? Come an' try it, uncle."

I lifted my face to where once God's sky had been, and besought The Trues that I might not die inarticulate, amid these half-worked miracles, but live at least till my fellow-mortals could be made one millionth as happy as I was happy. I prayed and I waited, and we went slow—slow as the processes of evolution—till the boat-hook rasped again.

"He's not what you might call a scientific navigator," said Pyecroft, still in the dinghy, but rising like a fairy from a pantomime trap. "The lead's what 'e goes by mostly; rum is what he's come for; an' Brixham is 'is 'ome. Lay on, Macduff!"

A white-whiskered man in a frock-coat—as I live by bread, a frock-coat!—sea-boots, and a comforter, crawled over the torpedo-tube into Moorshed's grip and vanished forward.

"'E'll probably 'old three gallon (Look sharp with that dinghy!); but 'is nephew, left in charge of the *Agatha*, wants two bottles command-allowance. You're a taxpayer, sir. Do you think that excessive?"

"Lead there! Lead!" rang out from forward.

"Didn't I say 'e wouldn't understand compass deviations? Watch 'im close. It'll be worth it!"

As I neared the bridge, I heard the stranger say: "Let me smell un!" and to his nose was the lead presented by a trained man of the King's Navy.

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"I'll tell 'ee where to goo, if you'll tell your donkey-man what to du. I'm no hand wi' steam." On these lines we proceeded miraculously, and, under Moorshed's orders — I was the fisherman's Ganymede, as M. de C. had been the Captain's—I found both rum and curaçoa in a locker, and mixed them equal bulk in an enamelled iron cup.

"Now we'm just abeam o' Brix'am 'Arbour," he said at last, "an' here we'll lay till she lifts. I'd take 'e in for another bottle —and wan for my nevvy; but I reckoned yeou'm shart-allowanced for rum. That's nivver no Navy rum yeou'm give me. Knowed 'ee by the smack tu un. Anchor now!"

I was between Pyecroft and Moorshed on the bridge, and heard them spring to vibrating attention at my side. A man with a lead a few feet to port caught the panic through my body, and checked like a wild boar at gaze, for far away an unmistakable ship's bell was ringing. It ceased, and another began.

"Them," said Pyecroft. "Anchored!"

"More!" said our pilot, passing me the cup, and I filled it. The trawler astern clattered vehemently on her bell. Pyecroft, with a jerk of his arm, threw loose the forward three-pounder. The bar of the back sight was heavily blobbed with dew; the foresight was invisible.

"No—they wouldn't have their picket-boats out in this weather, though they ought to." He returned the barrel to its crotch slowly.

"Be yeou gwine to anchor?" said Macduff, smacking his lips, "or be yeou gwine straight on to Livermead Beach?"

"Tell him what we're driving at. Get it into his head somehow," said Moorshed; and Pyecroft, snatching the cup from me, enfolded the old man with an arm and a mist of wonderful words.

"And if you pull it off," said Moorshed, "I'll give you a fiver."

"Lard! What's fivers to me, yong man? My nevvy, he likes 'em; but I do cherish more on fine drink than filthy lucre any day o' God's good weeks. Leave goo my arm, yeou common sailorman! I tall 'ee, gentlemen, I bain't the ram-faced, ruddle-nosed old fule yeou reckon I be. Before the mast I've fared in my time; fisherman I've been since I seed the unsense of sea-dangerin'. Baccy and spirits — yiss, an' cigars, too —I've run a plenty. I'm no blind harse nor boy to be coaxed with your forty-mile free towin' and rum atop of all, There's none more sober to Brix'am this tide — I don't care who 'tis—than me. *I* know —*I* know! Yander'm tu great King's ships. Yeou'm wishful to sink, burn, and destroy they while us kips 'em busy sellin' fish. No need tall me so twanty taime over. Us'll find they ships! Us'll find 'em, if us has to break our fine new bowsprit so close as Crump's bull's horn!"

"Good egg!" quoth Moorshed, and brought his hand down on the wide shoulders with the smack of a beaver's tail

"Us'll go look for they by hand. Us'll give they something to employ upon; an' do 'ee deal with them faithfully, an' may the Lard have mercy on your sowls! Amen. Put I in dinghy again."

The fog was as dense as ever—we moved in the very womb of night—but I cannot recall that I took the faintest note of it as the dinghy, guided by the tow-rope, disappeared towards the *Agatha*, Pyecroft rowing. The deep-toned bell began again on our starboard bow.

"We're pretty near," said Moorshed, slowing down. "Out with the Berthon. (*We'll* sell 'em fish, too.) And if anyone rows Navy stroke, I'll break his jaw with the tiller. Mr. Hinchcliffe" (this down the tube), "you'll stay here in charge with Gregory and Shergold and the engine-room staff. Morgan stays, too, for signalling purposes."

A deep groan broke from Morgan's chest, but he said nothing.

"If the fog thins and you're seen by anyone, keep 'em quiet with the signals. I can't think of the precise lie just now, but *you* can, Morgan."

"Yes, sir."

"Suppose their torpedo-nets are down?" I whispered, shivering with excitement.

"If they've been repairing minor defects all day, they won't have anyone to spare from the engine-room, and 'Out nets!' is a job for the whole ship's company. I expect they've trusted to the fog—like us. Well, Pyecroft?"

That great soul had blown up on to the bridge like a feather. "'Ad to see the first o' the rum into the *Agathites*, sir. They was a bit jealous o' their commandin' officer comin' 'ome so richly lacquered, and at first the *conversazione* languished, as you might say. But they sprang to attention ere I left. Six sharp strokes on the bells, if any of 'em are sober enough to keep tally, will be the signal that our consort 'as cast off 'er tow an' is manœuvrin' on 'er own."

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"Right O! Take Laughton with you in the dinghy. Put that Berthon over quietly there! Are you all right, Mr. Hinchcliffe?"

I stood back to avoid the rush of half-a-dozen shadows dropping into the Berthon boat. A hand caught me by the slack of garments, moved me in generous arcs through the night, and I rested on the bottom of the dinghy.

"I want you for *prima facie* evidence, in case the vaccination don't take," said Pyecroft in my ear. "Push off, Alf!"

The last bell-ringing was high overhead. It was followed by six little tinkles from the *Agatha*, the roar of her falling anchor, the clash of pans and loose shouting—

"Where be gwine tu? Port your 'ellum. Aie! you mud-dredger in the fair-way, go astern! Out boats! She'll sink us!"

A clear-cut Navy voice drawled from the clouds: "Quiet, you silly gardeners there! It's the *Cryptic* at anchor."

"Thank you for the range," said Pyecroft, and paddled gingerly. "Feel well in front of you, Alf. Remember your fat fist is our blighted Marconi installation."

The voices resumed—

"Bournemouth steamer he says she be."

"Then where be Brixham Harbour?"

"Damme, I'm a taxpayer, tu. They've no right to cruise about this way. I'll have the laa on 'ee if anything carries away."

Then the man-of-war—

"Short on your anchor! Heave short, you howling maniacs! You'll get yourselves smashed when you swing."

The air was full of these and other voices when the dinghy, checking, swung. I passed one hand down Laughton's stretched arm and felt an iron gooseneck and a foot or two of a backward-loping torpedo-net boom. The other hand I laid on broad, cold iron—even the flank of H.M.S. *Cryptic*, which is twelve thousand tons.

I heard a scrubby, raspy sound, as though Pyecroft had chosen that hour to shave, and I smelt paint. "Drop aft a bit, Alf; we'll sling a stencil under the stern six-inch casemate."

Boom by boom Laughton slid the dinghy along the towering curved wall. Once, twice, and again we stopped, and the keen scrubbing sound was renewed.

"Umpires are 'ard-'earted blighters, but this ought to convince 'em. . . . Captain Pinke's stern-walk is now above our defenceless 'eads. Repeat the evolution up the starboard side, Alf."

I was only conscious that we moved around an iron world palpitating with life. Though my knowledge was all by touch—as, for example, when Pyecroft led my surrendered hand to the base of some bulging sponsion, or when my palm closed on the knife-edge of the stem and patted it timidly—yet I felt lonely and unprotected, as the enormous, helpless ship was withdrawn, and we drifted away into the void where voices sang—

"Tom Pearce, Tom Pearce, lend me thy grey mare,
All along, out along, down along lea!
I want for to go to Widdicombe Fair
With Bill Brewer, Sam Sewer, Peter Gurney,
Harry Hawke,
Old Uncle Tom Cobley an' all!"

"That's old Sinbad an' 'is little lot. Give way, Alf! You might sing somethin', too."

"I'm no burnin' Patti. Ain't there noise enough for you, Pye?"

"Yes, but it's only amateurs. Give me the tones of 'earth an' 'ome. Ha! List to the blighter on the 'orizon sayin' 'is prayers, Navy-fashion. 'Eaven 'elp me argue that way when I'm a warrant-officer!"

We headed with little lapping strokes towards what seemed to be a fair-sized riot.

"An' I've 'eard the *Devolution* called a 'appy ship, too," said Pyecroft. "Just shows 'ow a man's misled by prejudice. She's peevish—that's what she is—nasty peevish. Prob'ly all because the *Agathites* are scratchin' 'er paint. Well, rub along, Alf. I've got the lymph!"

A voice, which Mr. Pyecroft assured me belonged to a chief carpenter, was speaking through an aperture (starboard bow twelve-pounder on the lower deck). He did not wish to purchase any fish even at grossly reduced rates. Nobody wished to buy any fish. This ship was the *Devolution* at anchor, and desired no communication with shore boats.

"Mark 'ow the Navy 'olds its own. He's sober. The *Agathites* are not, as you might say, an' yet they can't live with 'im. It's the discipline that does it. 'Ark to the bald an' unconvincin' watch-officer chimin' in. I wonder where Mr. Moorshed 'as got to?"

We drifted down the *Devolution's* side, as we had drifted down her sister's; and we dealt with her in that dense gloom as we had dealt with her sister.

"Whai! 'Tis a man-o'-war, after all! I can see the captain's whisker all gilt at the aidges! We took 'ee for the Bournemouth steamer. Three cheers for the real man-o'-war!"

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"But the men who hugged me most were Pyecroft and Moorshed, adrift among the nets."

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That cry came from under the *Devolution's* stern. Pyecroft held something in his teeth, for I heard him mumble: "Our Mister Moorshed!"

Said a boy's voice above us, just as we dodged a jet of hot water from some valve: "I don't half like that cheer. If I'd been the old man, I'd ha' turned loose the quick-firers at the first go-off. Aren't they rowing Navy-stroke yonder?"

"True," said Pyecroft, listening to retreating oars. "It's time to go 'ome when snotties begin to think. The fog's thinnin', too."

I felt a chill breath on my forehead, and saw a few feet of the steel stand out darker than the darkness, disappear—it was then the dinghy shot away from it—and emerge once more.

"Hallo! what boat's that?" said the voice suspiciously.

"Why, I do believe it's a real man-o'-war, after all," said Pyecroft, and kicked Laughton.

"What the deuce's that for?" Laughton was no dramatist.

"Answer in character, you blighter! Say somethin' apposite."

"What boat's *that-t?*" The hail was repeated.

"What do yee sa-ay?" Pyecroft bellowed, and, under his breath to me: "Give us a hand."

"It's called the *Marietta*—F. J. Stokes—Torquay," I began quaveringly. "At least, that's the name on the name-board. I've been dining—on a yacht."

"I see." The voice shook a little, and my way opened before me with disgraceful ease.

"Yesh. Dining private yacht. *Esh-mesheralda.* I belong to Torquay Yacht Club. *Are* you member Torquay Yacht Club?"

"You'd better go to bed, sir. Good night." We slid into the rapidly thinning fog.

"Dig out, Alf. Put your *nix-mangiare* back into it! The fog's peelin' off like a blighted petticoat. Where's Two Six Seven?"

"I can't see her," I replied, "but there's a light low down ahead."

"The *Agatha!*" They rowed desperately through the uneasy dispersal of the fog for ten minutes and ducked round the trawler's bow.

"Well, Emanuel means 'God with us'—so far." Pyecroft wiped his brow, laid a hand on the low rail, and, as he boosted me up to the trawler, I saw Moorshed's face, white as pearl in the thinning dark.

"Was it all right?" said he, over the bulwarks.

"Vaccination ain't in it. She's took beautiful. But where's 267, sir?" said Pyecroft.

"Gone. We came here as the fog lifted. I gave the *Devolution* four. Was that you behind us?"

"Yes, sir; but I only got in three on the *Devolution*. I give the *Cryppy* nine, though. They're both what you might call more or less vaccinated."

He lifted me inboard, where Moorshed and six pirates lay round the *Agatha's* hatch. There was a hint of daylight in the cool air.

"Where is the old man?" I asked.

"Still selling 'em fish, I suppose. He's a darling! But I wish I could get this filthy paint off my hands. Hallo! What the deuce is the *Cryptic* signalling?"

A pale masthead light winked through the last of the fog. It was answered by a dull glare to seaward.

"Destroyer signallin' with searchlight." Pyecroft leaped on the stern-rail. "The first part is private signals. Ah! now she's Morsing against the fog. 'P-O-S-T-P'—yes, 'postpone'—'D-E-P' (go on!) 'departure—till—further—orders—which—will—be—com' (he's dropped the other m) 'unicated—verbally. End.'" He swung round. "*Cryptic* is now answering: 'Ready—proceed—immediately. What—news—promised—destroyer—flotilla?'"

"Hallo!" said Moorshed. "Well, never mind. They'll come too late."

"Whew! That's some 'igh-born suckling on the destroyer. Destroyer says: 'Care not. All will be known later.' What bee-hive's broken loose now?"

"What odds! We've done our little job."

"Why—why—it's Two Six Seven!

Here Pyecroft dropped from the rail among the fishy nets and shook the *Agatha* with heavings. Moorshed cast aside his cigarette, looked over the stern, and fell into his subordinate's arms. I heard the guggle of engines, the rattle of a little anchor going over not a hundred yards away, a cough, and Morgan's subdued hail. . . . So far as I remember, it was Laughton whom I hugged; but the men who hugged me most were Pyecroft and Moorshed, adrift among the nets.

There was no semblance of discipline in

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our flight over the *Agatha's* side, nor, indeed, were ordinary precautions taken for the common safety, because (I was in the Berthon) they held that patent boat open by

"'Our dinghy, quick, or they'll paint our marks out!'"

hand for the most part. We regained our own craft, cackling like wild geese, and crowded round Moorshed and Hinchcliffe. Behind us the *Agatha's* boat, returning from her fish-selling cruise, yelled: "Have 'ee done the trick? Have 'ee done the trick?" and we could only shout hoarsely over the stern, guaranteeing rum by the hold-full.

"Fog got patchy here at 12.27," said Henry Salt Hinchcliffe, "growing clearer every instant in the dawn. Went down to Brixham Harbour to keep out of the road. Heard whistles to the south and went to look. I had her up to sixteen, good. Morgan kept on shedding private Red Fleet signals out of the signal-book, as the fog cleared, till we was answered by three destroyers. Morgan signalled 'em by searchlight: 'Alter course to South 17 East, so as not to lose time.' They came round quick. We kept well away—on their port beam—and Morgan gave 'em their orders." He looked at Morgan and coughed.

"The signalman, acting as second in command," said Morgan, swelling, "then informed destroyer flotilla that *Cryptic* and *Devolution* had made good defects, and, in obedience to Admiral's supplementary orders (I thought they'd suspect that, but they didn't), had proceeded at seven knots at 11.23 p.m. to new rendezvous near Channel Islands, seven miles N.N.W. the Casquet Light. (I've rendezvoused there myself.) Destroyer flotilla would therefore follow cruisers and catch up with them on their course. Destroyer flotilla then dug out on course indicated, all funnels sparking briskly.

"Who were the destroyers?"

"*Wraith*, *Kobbold*, *Stiletto*, Lieutenant-Commander A. L. Hignett, acting under Admiral's orders. They'd come slow on account of fog."

"Then who were you?"

"We were the *A-frite*, port engine broke down, put in to Torbay, and there instructed by *Cryptic*, previous to her departure with *Devolution*, to inform Commander Hignett of change of plans. Lieutenant-Commander Hignett signalled that our meeting was quite

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providential. After this, we returned to pick up our commanding officer, and being interrogated by *Cryptic*, marked time signalling as requisite, which you may have seen. The *Agatha* representing the last known rallying-point—or, as I should say, pivot-ship of the evolution—it was decided to repair to the *Agatha* at conclusion of manœuvre."

We breathed deeply, all of us, but no one spoke a word till Moorshed said: "Is there such a thing as one fine big drink aboard this one fine big battleship?"

"Can do, sir," said Pyecroft, and got it. Beginning with Mr. Moorshed and ending with myself, junior to the third first-class stoker, we drank, and it was as water of the brook, that two and a half inches of stiff, treacly, Navy rum. And we looked each in the other's face, and we nodded, bright-eyed, burning with bliss.

Moorshed walked aft to the torpedo-tubes and paced back and forth, a captain victorious on his own quarter-deck; and the triumphant day broke over the green-bedded villas of Torquay to show us the magnitude of our victory. There lay the cruisers (I have reason to believe that they had made good their defects). They were each four hundred and forty feet long and sixty-six wide; they held close upon eight hundred men apiece, and they had cost, say, a million and a half the pair. And they were ours and they did not know it. Indeed, the *Cryptic*, senior ship, was signalling vehement remarks to our address, which we did not notice.

"If you take these glasses, you'll get the general run o' last night's vaccination," said Pyecroft. "Each one represents a torpedo got 'ome."

I saw on the *Cryptic's* port side, as she lay half a mile away, across the glassy water, four neat white squares in outline, a white blur in the centre.

"There are five more to starboard. 'Ere's the original!" He handed me a paint-dappled copper stencil-plate, two feet square, bearing in the centre the six-inch initials, "G. M."

"Ten minutes ago I'd ha' eulogised about that little trick of ours, but Morgan's performances 'ave short-circuited me. Are you 'appy, Morgan?"

"Bustin'," said the signalman briefly.

"You may be. 'Eaven forgive you, Morgan, for, as Queen 'Enrietta said to the 'ousemaid, *I* never will. I'd ha' given a year's pay for ten minutes o' your signallin' this mornin'."

"I wouldn't 'ave took it up," was the answer. "Perishin' 'Eavens above! Look at the *Devolution's* semaphore!" Two black wooden arms waved from the junior ship's upper bridge. "They've seen it."

"*The* mote *on* their neighbour's beam, of course," said Pyecroft, and read syllable by syllable: "'Captain Malan to Captain Pinke. Is—sten—cilled—frieze your starboard side new Admiralty regulation, or your Number One's private expense?' Now *Cryptic* is saying, 'Not understood.' Poor old *Crippy*, The *Devolute's* raggin' 'er sore. 'Who is *G. M.*?' she says. That's fetched the *Cryptic:* she's answerin': 'You ought to know. Examine own paintwork.' They're both on to it now! This is balm. This is beginning to be balm. I forgive you, Morgan!"

Two frantic pipes twittered. From either cruiser a whaler dropped into the water and madly rowed round the ship; as a gay-coloured hoist rose to the *Cryptic's* yard-arm: "Destroyer will close at once. Wish to speak by semaphore." Then on the bridge semaphore itself: "Have been trying to attract your attention last half-hour Send commanding officer aboard at once."

"Our attention? After all the attention we've given 'er, too," said Pyecroft. "What a greedy old lady!" To Moorshed: "Signal from *Cryptic*, sir."

"Signals be hanged!" said the boy, peering through his glasses. "Our dinghy, quick, or they'll paint our marks out. Come along!"

By this time I was long past even hysteria. I remember Pyecroft's bending back, the surge of the driven dinghy, a knot of amazed faces as we skimmed the *Cryptic's* ram, and the dropped jaw of the midshipman in her whaler when we barged fairly into him."

"Mind my paint!" he yelled.

"You mind mine, snotty," said Moorshed. "I was all night putting these little ear-marks on you for the umpires to sit on. Leave 'em alone."

We splashed past him to the *Devolution's* boat, where sat no one less than her first lieutenant, a singularly unhandy-looking officer.

"What the deuce is the meaning of this?" he roared, with an accusing forefinger.

"You're sunk, that's all. You've been dead half a tide."

"Dead, am I? *I'll* show you whether I'm dead or not, sir!"

"Well, you may be a survivor," said

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Moorshed ingratiatingly, "though it isn't at all likely."

The officer choked for a minute. The midshipman crouched up in stern said, half aloud: "Then I *was* right—last night."

"Yesh," I gasped from the dinghy's coal-dust. "Are you member Torquay Yacht Club?"

"Hell!" said the first lieutenant, and fled away. The *Cryptic's* boat was already at that cruiser's side, and semaphores flicked zealously from ship to ship. We floated, a minute speck, between the two hulls, while the pipes went for the captain's galley on the *Devolution*.

"That's all right," said Moorshed. "Wait till the gangway's down and then board her decently. We oughtn't to be expected to climb up a ship we've sunk."

Pyecroft lay on his disreputable oars till Captain Malan, full-uniformed, descended the *Devolution's* side. With due compliments—not acknowledged, I grieve to say—we fell in behind his sumptuous galley, and at last, upon pressing invitation, climbed, black as sweeps all, the lowered ladder of the *Cryptic*. At the top stood as fine a constellation of marine stars as ever sang together of a morning on a King's ship. Everyone who could get within earshot found that his work took him aft. I counted eleven able seamen polishing the breech-block of the stern nine-point-two, four Marines zealously relieving each other at the lifebuoy, six call-boys, nine midshipmen of the watch, exclusive of naval cadets, and the higher ranks past all census.

"If I die o' joy," said Pyecroft behind his hand, "remember I died forgivin' Morgan from the bottom of my 'eart, because like Martha, we 'ave skoffed the better part. You'd better try to come to attention, sir."

"'Ere, come 'ere! What's 'appened? Oh! come *'ere* an' tell.'"

Moorshed ran his eye voluptuously over the upper deck battery, the huge beam, and the immaculate perspective of power. Captain Pinke and Captain Malan stood on the well-browned flash-plates by the dazzling hatch. Precisely over the flagstaff I saw Two Six Seven astern, her black petticoat half hitched up, meekly floating on the still sea. She looked like the pious Abigail who has just spoken her mind, and, with folded hands, sits thanking Heaven among the pieces. I could almost have sworn that she wore black worsted gloves and had a little dry cough. But it was Captain Pinke that coughed so austerely. He favoured us with a lecture on uniform, deportment, and the urgent necessity of answering signals from a senior ship. He told us that he disapproved of masquerading, that he loved discipline, and would be obliged by an explanation. And while he delivered himself deeper and more deeply into our hands, I saw Captain Malan wince. He was watching Moorshed's eye.

"I belong to Blue Fleet, sir. I command Number Two Six Seven," said Moorshed,

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and Captain Pinke was dumb. "Have you such a thing as a frame-plan of the *Cryptic* aboard?" He spoke with winning politeness, as he opened a small and neatly folded paper.

"I have, sir." The little man's face was working with passion.

"Ah! Then I shall be able to show you precisely where you were torpedoed last night in"—he consulted the paper with one finely arched eyebrow—"in nine places. And since the *Devolution* is, I understand, a sister ship"—he bowed slightly towards Captain Malan—"the same plan——"

I had followed the clear precision of each word with a dumb amazement which seemed to leave my mind abnormally clear. I saw Captain Malan's eye turn from Moorshed and seek that of the *Cryptic's* Commander. And he telegraphed as clearly as Moorshed was speaking: "My dear friend and brother-officer, *I* know Pinke; *you* know Pinke; *we* know Pinke—good little Pinke! In less than three Greenwich chronometer seconds Pinke will make an enormous ass of himself, and I shall have to put things straight, unless you, who are a man of tact and discernment——"

"Carry on!" The Commander's order supplied the unspoken word. The cruiser boiled about her business around us; watch and watch officers together, up to the limit of noise permissible. I saw Captain Malan turn to his senior.

"Come to my cabin!" said Pinke gratingly, and led the way. Pyecroft and I stayed still.

"It's all right," said Pyecroft. "They daren't leave us loose aboard for one revolution," and I knew that he had seen what I had seen.

"You, too!" said Captain Malan, returning suddenly.

We passed the sentry between white enamelled walls of speckless small arms, and since that Royal Marine Light Infantryman was visibly suffocating from curiosity, I winked at him. We entered the chintz-adorned, photo-speckled, brass-fendered, tile-stoved main cabin. Moorshed, with a ruler, was demonstrating before the frame-plan of H.M.S. *Cryptic*.

"——making nine stencils in all, of my initials G. M." I heard him say. "Further, you will find attached to your rudder, and you, too, sir,"—he bowed to Captain Malan yet again—"one fourteen-inch Mark IV. practice torpedo, as issued to first-class torpedo boats, properly buoyed. I have sent full particulars by telegraph to the umpires, and have requested them to judge on the facts as they—appear." He nodded through the large window to the stencilled *Devolution* awink with brasswork in the morning sun, and ceased.

Captain Pinke faced us. I remembered that this was only play, and caught myself wondering with what keener agony comes the real defeat.

"Good Heavens, Johnny!" he said, dropping his lower lip like a child, "this young pup says he has put us both out of action. Inconceivable—eh? My first command of one of the class. Eh? What shall we do with him? What shall we do with him—eh?

"As far as I can see, there's no getting over the stencils," his companion answered.

"Why didn't I have the nets down? Why didn't I have the nets down?" The cry tore itself from Captain Pinke's chest as he twisted his hands.

"I suppose we'd better wait and find out what the umpires will say. The Admiral won't be exactly pleased." Captain Malan spoke very soothingly. Moorshed looked out through the stern port at Two Six Seven. Pyecroft and I, at attention, studied the paintwork opposite. Captain Pinke had dropped into his desk-chair, and scribbled nervously at a blotting-pad.

Just before the tension became unendurable, he looked at his junior for a lead.

"What—what are you going to do about it, Johnny—eh?

"Well, if you don't want him, I'm going to ask this young gentleman to breakfast, and then we'll make an' mend clothes till the umpires have decided."

Captain Pinke flung out a hand swiftly.

"Come with me," said Captain Malan. "Your men had better go back in the dinghy to—their—own—ship."

"Yes, I think so," said Moorshed, and passed out behind the captain. We followed at a respectful interval, waiting till they had ascended the ladder.

Said the sentry, rigid as the naked barometer behind him: "'Ere, come 'ere! What's 'appened? Oh! come *'ere* an' tell."

"Tell? You?" said Pyecroft. Neither man's lips moved, and the words were whispers. "Your ultimate illegitimate grandchildren might begin to understand, not you—nor ever will."

"Captain Malan's galley's away, sir," cried a voice above; and one replied: "Then get

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those two greasers into their dinghy and hoist the blue peter. We're out of action."

"Can you do it, sir?" said Pyecroft at the foot of the ladder. "Do you think it is in the English language, or do you not?"

"I don't think I can, but I'll try. If it takes me a year, I'll try."

* * * * *

There are witnesses who can testify that I have used no artifice. I have, on the contrary, cut away priceless slabs of *opus alexandrinum*. My gold I have lacquered down to dull bronze; my purples overlaid with sepia of the sea; and for hell-hearted ruby and blinding diamond I have substituted pale amethyst and mere jargoon. Because I would say again: "Disregarding the inventions of the Marine Captain whose other name is Gubbins, let a plain statement suffice."

THE POACHERS. FROM A PICTURE BY S. E. WALLER.

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"COME out of that, now!" cried the policeman, pausing by what appeared to be a bundle of rags upon a doorstep. "You can't stay there, you know; you must go home."

The bundle in answer reared suddenly up, revealing itself to be a child, a girl with pinched face and large, frightened eyes.

"Why don't you get along home?" continued the policeman. "You'll be frozen to death, sitting about in this weather. What have you got there?"

"Only matches, sir."

"Matches! Well, take 'em home till to-morrow. Where do you live, eh?"

"Oh! please, sir, don't take me home! Let me go! let me go!" And leaping past him, the child ran like a frightened hare up the street, and was out of sight round the first corner in a moment, little knowing that it was from a friend that she thus ran, instead of from an enemy, as she supposed. But poor little Polly's surroundings from earliest childhood had taught her to shrink from anything connected with law and order, and among the inhabitants of the wretched neighbourhood from which she came, a policeman was regarded as an enemy to be specially avoided at all times. But there was something also beyond this which lent wings to her feet and fear to her heart. She was afraid of being compelled to return to where she knew that a cruel beating awaited her for not having been successful in selling the whole of her bundle of matches. So, cold, weary, and hungry as she was, the matches must be sold; and down the busy streets went those tired feet, halting at last at a favourite corner where omnibuses stopped and passed in quick succession. Surely some among those many passengers ascending and descending would require a box of lights?

Yes, a customer almost immediately—a man who hastily took a box, and so carelessly threw a coin in payment that it fell with a ring on the pavement at her feet, rolled across the kerbstone and into the gutter, where it settled down beside a square brown-paper parcel which was so besmeared with mud that it had probably lain there for some hours unnoticed.

Polly recovered her penny and took up the parcel wonderingly. It was firmly tied across and across with fine string, but the thin, brown outer paper had gone to so much pulp, and where it had rubbed off at one side there could be seen underneath a box of plain white deal. The excitement of this wonderful find blew all other thoughts just then from her mind; and carrying it innocently before her, she walked away, seeking for a quieter spot in which to examine it more closely. The park gates suggested to her all that was desirable, so she entered therein and threw herself down in the shadow of a great, bare, wintry tree, and there set to work to open the box. What was it that met her amazed and admiring gaze when at last the jealous lid fell open? Something that would be perhaps quite familiar to your eyes, dear readers, but to Polly they were wonders unknown; for there in neat rows, with tiny silver comfits wedged into every available little space, lay regiments of delicious sweetmeats! Some were brown, with crinkled pink and yellow lines running across; some crystallised pink and white sweets in exquisite shapes; long, bolster-shaped sweets, round sweets, square sweets, flat sweets, sweets of all descriptions, a peep underneath the top layer of snowy paper revealing

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still more of these wonderful concoctions, from the friendly chocolate-cream to the polished French almond, and little silver packets tied up with wee, many-coloured ribbons in bows so tiny and perfect that it seemed fairy fingers alone could have made them. These little packets so overcame Polly that she closed her eyes and murmured "How lovely! And they're to eat, too; but I couldn't eat 'em nohow, not for anything!" She took another look at the delicacies in her lap, starting, as she did so, with amazement. Surely upon each sweetmeat glowed a charming little face, the eyes of all returning her own astonished gaze!

"They joined hands and danced round poor, bewildered Polly."

Yes, it was indeed so; and yet—oh! impossible! Again she closed her eyes; then, opening them suddenly, looked once more; but the faces were gone! She picked up the box-lid thoughtfully.

"I'll shut 'em up again," she thought. "They don't belong to me nohow. Perhaps it's 'cause I hadn't oughter have 'em that I thought I see 'em a-looking at me. And no wonder. What business has the likes o' me with these here? They're for them as can eat 'em, not for me as could only look at 'em for ever and ever." She sighed and dropped the lid into its place, when instantly a chorus of tiny voices arose from beneath it, so startling her that she fell backwards, tumbling the box on the frosty ground. The lid flew off, and from inside there issued a perfect crowd of little sprites; only, unlike the Sprites of Pandora, these were the loveliest little creatures that ever appeared to mortal child.

"Let us out! Let us out! Let us out!" they cried, and they joined hands and danced round poor, bewildered Polly in such swift, bewildering measures that she seemed to be encircled by rainbow lights. Their little voices, too, were shrilling, and they sang as they danced like a happy troop of children just let out from school:—

Trip so lightly, east wind sighing;
Shadows fall while day is dying;
Near to bustling, noisy streets,
Dance the Fairies of the Sweets!

More slowly now they danced, and yet more slowly, until Polly could make out their forms and colour, upon which she noticed that they were almost exactly like the sweets that were in her box; and it was not difficult to recognise them, but even had it been so, they very soon made themselves known, each coming forward separately for this purpose when the dance was ended, and introducing herself as follows:—

Greeting, mortal child, I bring
To thee from the fairy ring;
At my birth it was my fate
To be christened Chocolate.

Second Fairy:

Hearken, Polly, while I sing;
Greeting bright I also bring;
When my birthday, dear, was come,
I was christened Sugar-Plum!

Third Fairy:

Greeting, too, from me receive,
And—you'll scarcely this believe—
When my fairy life began,
I was christened Marzipan!

Fourth Fairy:

Greeting, let me also, dear,
Whisper in thy mortal ear;
I come from a hardy stock,
And my name is Almond-Rock!

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Fifth Fairy:
Here a kiss I blow to thee,
Polly, 'neath the leafless tree;
By the light of Luna's beam
I was christened Fondant-Cream.

Sixth Fairy:
Greetings of the very best
Offer I with all the rest;
At my name you'll be surprised,
I am Violet Crystallised.

And so on till there was not one who had not made her bow to the crouching, wondering child.

"And now," said Fairy Sugar-Plum, "now that you know us all, let us sit down and talk. I suppose you are surprised to see us?"

"Yes," admitted Polly, "I am"; and she ventured to sit up straight again, upon which Fairy Chocolate threw her a kiss, and straightway Polly found a piece of chocolate in her lips, which she proceeded to eat with great satisfaction, none the less that it was tempered with so much mystery.

"We know all about you, my dear child," said Fairy Marzipan. "We know that your life is a hard one—undeservedly so; for you are a good little girl, and we mean to help you."

"We do! We do!" echoed the fairies, and one of them, synonymous of her name, blew Polly a sugar-plum.

As for Polly, she was so surprised at being called good—being more used to blows and hard words for whatever she might do or say—that she swallowed the sugar-plum whole, and, what was more serious, unexpectedly, which brought about such a fit of coughing and choking that the fairies retired a few feet in dismay.

"Don't do it again!" implored Fondant-Cream nervously.

She was a delicate, frail creature, all pink and white, and Polly had blown her right off her feet, so that she had had the trouble of hastily unfolding her long, gauzy wings. But they soon drew round again, their beautiful, little, earnest faces lifted upwards, and their lustrous eyes fixed upon the little girl.

"You know," began Fairy Chocolate seriously, "we have often watched you standing with your matches outside the shop-window in which we lay; and one day we saw you lend a willing ear to the plaint of a poor soul whom all others had passed unheeded, and help her across the busy street."

"Oh! that wasn't nothing!" exclaimed Polly. "Why, she was blind, she was!"

"And then another day," continued the fairy, "another day, we saw you take money from a passer-by in payment for matches, and hasten after him the next moment that he might exchange the coin for another."

"Yes, I remember that!" cried Polly in

"They arranged themselves comfortably all over the white counterpane."

surprise; "but that wasn't nothin' either; for the stoopid 'ad gimme a bo—shillin' for a 'a'pe'ny."

"Honest and kind," murmured the fairies among themselves, and as in a dream Polly wondered of whom they could be talking. She could not see them so distinctly as she could do a few minutes before, and there seemed a humming noise in the air, as of distant breakers breaking upon a rocky shore.

"Do not be afraid," murmured one of the fairies in her ear; "all will be well with thee."

"I'm so sleepy," sighed Polly—"so tired and sleepy. I'm afraid to go home. I wish I had a mother like some as I've heard tell of. Oh! oh! I'm *that* tired!" She fell backwards with closed eyes, yet still heard faintly, as in a dream, the dying-away voices of her little friends.

"You are our special charge, and we will watch over you always, dear one. Now we go to your mother, but not in the box!—ha! ha!—no, not in the box! There will

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be a fog to-night. We shall go in on a fog-cloud in the still, quiet hours. Fare thee well, oh, Polly, darling! fare thee well, and sleep thou sweetly! Sleep. . . . Sleep. . . ." And they crowded around, wafting her into happy unconsciousness with the fanning of their wings; and so presently, when the park-keeper discovered her, where she lay upon the death-cold ground, the smile frozen upon her lips was one of such happy contentment and peacefulness that unwonted tears sprang to his eyes.

"This is a bad business, mate!" he cried to the policeman who hurried to his call. "Here's a poor little soul frozen to death; and if she doesn't look glad to be gone, I'm——"

"Never mind that," hurriedly said the more practical policeman. "Speed is everything now. Here! roll her up in my cape while I fetch a cab."

But Polly was not dead, although she passed very near to the great dark portals.

"Satisfied with their godmothership, danced a gay farewell."

She awoke one day to find herself in a strange place. Although too ill and weak to remember what had gone before, yet she realised she was lying upon a real bedstead, and the bedstead stood in a long, light room, and somebody with what to her was a lovely voice, but which was simply the low, cultivated accents of a lady in her beautiful uniform of hospital nurse, stood conversing by her side.

Just this she realised, then sank to sleep again; but many times afterwards seemed to partially awake to this atmosphere of quiet, spacious light and comfort, always to pass away again into that great unknown nothingness. But one day, one never-to-be-forgotten day, she awoke to see her mother sitting by her side. Her mother—yes; but not her mother as she had previously known her, but her mother clad in simple, cleanly garments, her hair smoothly brushed as Polly never remembered to have known it before, and looking like a picture she had seen perchance in some great picture-dealer's window, of the serene Madonna. Only that her mother's face was always so red, and it was redder than ever now, for she had been weeping bitterly, poor, misguided soul! and was trying hard to suppress her sobs when she suddenly caught the startled, wondering eyes of Polly fixed full upon her.

"It's—it's all right, my gal!" she said in a half-stifled voice. "It's all right, Poll. I've been a bad mother to yer, and I've banged yer a mortal lot, and I'm sorry; and I declare ter——"

The nurse sprang forward; but Polly was gone, startled back into that unconsciousness which is so like death—and sleep. Then there came to her, as plainly as she had seen them under the bare, wintry tree, the Sweet Fairies. They arranged themselves comfortably all over the white counterpane, and Fairy Marzipan, laughing and shaking a small finger, said: "This will not do! You must not come back into this region just as you are wanted in the other."

"Not that it matters, you know," added Fairy Chocolate reassuringly; "for we have worked all things for you, and you will be happy now, Polly, loved and happy. Think of it, Polly! loved and happy!"

And they all chorused: "Think of it! Think of it!" until their voices seemed to blend into one, then to fall into a refrain the soothing melody of which passed all description. And Polly was soothed, then entranced, then filled with a quiet, calm happiness which nothing could touch or take from her, through all the years she was destined to live, in hardship and poverty often, but always in cheerfulness, loving and loved, until the time came when a new life unfolded to her, and the Fairies, satisfied with their godmothership, danced a gay farewell upon her happy marriage morning.

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"FACT AND FANCY." FROM THE PICTURE BY SIR JOSEPH NOEL PATON.

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"BOBBING."

By A BOBBER.

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WHENEVER the Englishman takes up the sport of another nation, two things may be safely predicted. The first is, that the game will be so developed and systematised that it will scarcely be able to recognise itself; and the second, that if it be by any means possible, his womankind will soon claim their share of the fun. The alterations are not invariably for the better. Golf was a finer game before the era of patent clubs and the new balls which "fly of themselves." Polo and tobogganing, on the contrary, have been turned from a game into a

1.—A START.

2.—GOING EASY.

science, while the first of these—polo—is practically the only sport in which women have not found an excuse for joining. American papers affirmed otherwise not so long ago, but the report has found no confirmation outside their pages.

When women begin to join in a sport which is one of real risks, a process of evolution usually results. This has occurred in tobogganing, and its result is to be seen in the "bob-sleigh," or, as it is familiarly called, the "bob." A "bob" is, in fact, an immense, elongated toboggan, built to seat from four to six passengers. A six-passenger machine, without its crew or any ballast, will weigh several hundredweight. It is, therefore, not an instrument with which it is advisable to play tricks. The "seat" is of boards, just wide enough to allow of a

3.—GATHERING WAY.

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man's sitting upon it with moderate comfort. This seat, duly padded, is fixed to two pairs of steel runners, of which the front pair are attached in the manner of *bogies*. This, as

4.—GATHERED WAY.

any student of locomotive lore knows, means that the runners are fastened to the frame by pivots. A rigid carriage or frame, many feet long, could not take acute curves or angles at a high rate of speed without the greatest risk of upsetting. By this device,

5.—LADY PICKING A COURSE FOR FIRST CORNER.

6. CURVING ROUND A CORNER.

the wheels or runners negotiate the curves while the rigid frame swings at an angle to the track, recovering its proper position as the course resumes its normal direction. This front pair of bogie-runners on a bob is furnished with a steel cross-bar, just in front of the head of the frame. The steersman, who sits first, manipulates these by means of a rope and pulley attachment. At the extreme rear, occasionally also at the centre, there are a pair of levers working a huge toothrake which serves the most necessary purpose of a brake. This is a bob in outline. If any ballast, beyond the weight of the crew, is needed, it is carried in the form of heavy "pigs" of lead secured to the lower surface by screws.

The present Duke of Manchester, being of an ingenious mind, has steered a "bob" with his hands, lying face downwards in approved tobogganing fashion, and reaching forward so as to handle the front steering-bar without using the ordinary rope attachment. But experiment soon showed that the ordinary method was the better, if only because a man lying prone requires four times the room of one seated according to the natural method of humankind. Real tobogganing, racing tobogganing, is a somewhat serious under-

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taking. It cannot be practised with any accuracy except on a prepared "run" with a pure ice surface. The angles of such a run must also be "raked" or "banked," otherwise the speed of a rider, like that of a bicyclist, will fling him off the track at even the smallest turn, on account of the immense centrifugal force which comes into play where heavy bodies moving at high speeds are at all diverted from a straight course. A bicycle on its single wheel-base of a few inches can turn many "flat" corners at a speed which would entail instant upset on a twin-wheeled machine like the tricycle. Far more certain is the overturning of a toboggan, going at any speed from fifteen to sixty miles an hour, and with a double-base of at least three feet on which to travel, as against the tricycle's five to fifteen miles' speed on a six-inch base at most. A bob needs no prepared track further than an ordinary road with a beaten snow surface; to race one on an ice road would court risks such as few would willingly face. Hence bobbing can be practised on any high-road having a sufficient length of suitable slope. Of all such roads, the Klösters course, near Davos, is probably the best. This road is some four miles long, with a pronounced fall all the way. It has the further merit of enabling the racer and his machine to return to the summit by the little mountain railway which connects the Lower Engadine with the Ragatz Valley below. Ordinarily, the cumbrous machines must be drawn up by sleigh, the riders walking or driving up. There are other good roads at Arosa and St. Moritz. At St. Moritz the course is laid along the main-road towards the Albula Pass, called—from the name of the village at its foot—the Cresta Road. This course is, perhaps, two miles long, with a moderate first and severe turn, and with a good fall all the way. Near the foot it crosses the ice-run of the same name, while a convenient ravine enables the starter to hand-signal the timekeepers at the other end. Most of the illustrations to this article were taken

7.—ALMOST OVER.

8—THE "GROWLER" COMES TO GRIEF AT HORSESHOE CORNER.

9.—A BAD SPILL OVER HORSESHOE CORNER.

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during the progress of races on the Cresta Road.

The crew of a bob sits one upon another. The first, or steersman, rests his feet against

10.—THE "JOKER" BOB-SLEIGH ROUNDING CORNER.

a bar designed to give him purchase when hauling on the guide-ropes at a high rate of speed. The amount of effort involved in wrenching a heavy machine round an acute corner needs experience before it can be credited. The first illustration of a lady steering her bob down a steep incline,

11.—THE INVINCIBLE "BEETLE" IN FULL CAREER, AND WINNING THE "BEETLE" CHALLENGE CUP.

12.—THE "BEETLE" BOB-SLEIGH.

specially built to gain a good impetus at the start, explains the steering arrangement more clearly than any words. Later pictures demonstrate the method by which the remainder of the crew endeavour to pack their legs into the least possible compass, and also the loops of leather running down each side of the machine, by grasping which the members of the crew maintain as rigid a position as possible. The extremely bunched-up appearance of the last man's legs in the first illustration is due to the gymnastics which the start entails on the two hindmost members. These start their machine by running alongside and pushing upon the shoulders of those next in order. This process must be repeated when the taking of a corner, or other cause, has compelled use of the brakes in such a way as seriously to reduce speed. The task is one requiring very great sureness of foot and general agility, as the runners have literally to "fall" into their places without kicking those in front, without stumbling (which is excessively easy on a steep, beaten-snow hill), and without destroying the equilibrium of their machine, an eventuality which is much more probable than would be supposed. Where an ice start is used, as shown in the first illustration, the initial running is limited to the last man, who has charge of the brakes, and whose task of gaining his seat is even more precarious an affair than where the runner is "blown" with a prolonged effort.

As in all sports requiring combination

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13.—AT CRESTA CORNER.

between the members of a team, the crew of a bob are ruled by their steersman, who shouts his orders to "Brake!" to "Bend!"—*i.e.*, to lean over towards the inside when running round a corner at speed; to "Now! now!"—in other words to jerk the body forward in unison so as to force the machine along at a higher speed; or to "Lie!"—*i.e.*, to lean back in order to present the least possible resistance to the air. There is great rivalry between the captains and crews, and a continual system of races has brought out something very like genius on the part of many individuals. The "Beetle" bob of St. Moritz might thus be called the invincible, so unapproachable is the science of its owner, and the combination of his crew, and this year after year.

Let us now glance at the illustrations in order. We have already spoken of the first. The second shows a comfortable family party of Americans "going easy," as their faces clearly show. Not so the third party, shown at the same point of the St. Moritz course. They are obviously racing, and every member of the crew is clearly occupied in a critical consideration of the course steered by an anxious captain. Nor is their concern unjustified if we are to compare their pace at this middle stage in the first half of the run with that already attained by the machine shown in No. 4 again at the same point. The steersman plainly knows his own mind as to the right course, and his crew are only occupied in an endeavour to reduce resistance to a minimum by leaning back almost flat, one upon another. The next picture brings us to the beginning of difficulties. The little Australian lady, who aptly calls her machine the "Dingo," takes life merrily, but that does not prevent her from calculating her course with every care. Still, responsibility does not afflict her mind to anything like the

14.—THE CREW OF THE CELEBRATED "BEETLE" BOB.

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same extent as it does that of her male counterpart (No. 6), who has just negotiated a corner safely and is highly concerned at some necessity which has arisen for reducing speed, as is shown by the clouds of powdered snow thrown up by the brakes, manipulated in this case by a most popular Russian and good sportsman—for winter society at St. Moritz is nothing if not cosmopolitan. And that there is need for seriousness in the conductor of a bob is shown in this next representation of a machine all but overturned at the corner known as the "horseshoe." Here a heavy rampart has been thrown up of packed snow, several feet in height. The present steersman has taken the angle too short, and by avoiding the greater difficulties of its beginning has come to destruction at the tail. Still, he has not treated his crew by any means as hardly as the lady who successfully overturns them. Their faces show the damage to be of no great account, but that is the fortune of war. The smash of No. 9 does not reveal faces, or there would be some interesting exhibitions of real panic. The pace indulged in by this lady at the most dangerous point on the whole course, whether through foolhardiness or lack of response on the part of her brakesman, has found dire retribution, deserving, even if it does incur them, many penalties of aches and bruises; fortunate if it fails to produce matter for the aid of St. Moritz's many doctors.

Apart from the problem of this corner, the St. Moritz course presents little danger which is actually due to the ground traversed. It does, however, require a keen eye, and a strong and steady arm, when an erratic sleigh, piled high with pine logs, suddenly appears round a bend. Then, whatever the amusement of the crew (No. 10), it behoves a wise steersman to reduce speed and go easy, even at the cost of a victory missed.

The exhilaration of bobbing must be felt to be credited, and once felt, every winter brings the recurrent desire to be up and away to a land where the seasons are what they pretend to be. There is one London publisher of grave aspect who yearly disappears, no one in his office knows whither. Yet the *habitués* of the Klösters course know that the first fortnight of January feels somehow incomplete if his face is not visible steering a minimum of three courses per day.

To begin the pastime is corporate and competitive, sociable, but yet with a serious end in view, the proof actual of excellence being the ability to win your race. It is speculative—you are running against the invisible and most alluring rival, Time, since no son of man has ever dared to race two bobs abreast. It is speculative, again, since no knowledge or eyesight can read the secrets hidden under the surface of a snow-covered road, and a soft patch may spill you in one way, or a hard patch bring the dreaded side-slip which spells ruin irretrievable. It is a tonic, for the wisest doctor yet born never concocted a medicine able to brace like this headlong plunge through the frosty Engadine air at twenty miles an hour and in twenty degrees of frost, wherever—and that is often—you pass out of the sun's direct path. It is quite dangerous in a mild way—a false touch on the guide-ropes, a skid, or a wood-sleigh round the next corner, may spell an upset, perhaps broken limbs, certainly a plunge bath in the snow. Men may sigh for the wind in the rigging of a yacht, for the rush of free air round a motor-car, but the desire for fast motion over snow and through snow has an allurement greater than that of any other pastime—when, that is, you have once tasted its joys.

And if you would taste those joys in perfection, pick a crew willing to face the risks, hire a stout two-horse sleigh, and start out early in the morning for some neighbouring pass. At the summit, untie your bob from the backbar of the sleigh and, all things being in order, launch out on the untried miles of descent. If the steersman's nerve be sound and the brakesman's arms strong and entirely untiring, if the gods are kind and you meet no ascending sleigh at one of the score and more of acute, unguarded turns, your places at *table d'hôte* that evening may know you bronzed and with unrivalled appetites. And if not—if, one or all, you have paid the penalty of rash folly—what reasonable ground is there of complaint? Existence is never so sweet as when daring much, and, having dared and suffered, *honi soit qui s'en plaigne.*

Since the above was written, the "Bündesrath"—or States-Council of the Swiss Confederation—has forbidden all future "bobbing" on "post-roads." Hitherto the "post" has been the sole vehicle which refused to stir an inch, thus spoiling many a race and importing many a risk to the bobber. The great Klösters Road at Davos is not a post-route, and therefore remains available; but the St. Moritz Cresta Road is closed. Bazaars, etc., have, however, realised a goodly sum, and a special "bob-track" has been cleared in readiness for the present season.

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AT BAY!

By Oscar Wilson.

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BY A MERE ACCIDENT.

By E. NESBIT.*

HER fresh, fair face glowed like a pink rose between the dark lustre of her sables, and the frame of soft hair which repeated, with the softness of an echo, the sables' colouring of mingled brown and black. The white, wintry sunshine struck through the window of the railway carriage and made jewels of her blue, Irish eyes. Railway rug and Gladstone, muff and handbag were grouped about her. On the blue cushion at her side lay a sheaf of papers and reviews freshly reaped from the bookstall. On her green cloth lap lay a great bunch of violets.

"They will be companions," said the man who stood at the carriage door. "Don't let them talk too much, or they will bore you."

"Could violets possibly bore one?"

"These might, if they did their duty and spoke of me."

She laughed, but she did not look at him.

"Your boxes are all right, and your bicycle's in the van at the back, and here is your ticket. You are sure you prefer solitude? Your aunt will regret having allowed me to see you off, and your mother will tell me that I ought to have secured for you the travelling companionship of at least one tabby."

"I prefer the violets."

Here the guard locked the carriage door, the man stood leaning his arms on the window, and passengers passing along the crowded platform scowled at the possessive set of his shoulders.

A jar, a whistle, a flag waved, and the train began to shudder and to move. The man kissed the smoothly gloved hand that lay on the window and drew back. As he did so, another man came up the platform running with great strides, caught at the handle of the door, shook it, and as it resisted, leaped on the step of the carriage, amid the shouts of porters, and was borne out of the station clinging to the carriage door.

"The door's locked," she said from within.

The man on the step thrust a bag through the window on to the seat and felt in his pocket. Then he moved a couple of feet past the carriage door, unlocked it with a railway key, stepped into the carriage, and closed the door after him.

"That was a near thing!" he said. And now for the first time the fellow-travellers looked in each other's face.

His mouth grew stern. The pink faded from her face, and a greenish pallor crept up to the blue eyes.

"*You!*" she said.

He looked at her critically—raised his hat without speaking, and busied himself with the straps of his bag. From this he took a book, and in it read sedulously, never raising his eyes.

She watched him by stolen glances, met always by the defence of his drooped lids. The lids were broad and white, and she knew well what manner of eyes they covered. Eyes mocking, disdainful, yet capable of a rare tenderness—beside which the consistent kindness, the open worship of other eyes seemed hardly worth the having. A handsome man for the rest—big and broad-shouldered, and with the masterful air beloved of dogs and servants and women.

Grown bolder, she watched him now no more by fleet, snatched instants, but steadily, as the train rattled and swung in its gathering speed. She looked at the firm hands that held the book. A year ago those hands had held hers; she trembled at the memory of their touch. She looked at his lips—firm, smooth, pale lips, set in a thin line. A year ago those lips——

It was at this moment that he raised his eyes and looked at her. A hot blush covered her face and ears and neck. He looked at her for one brief instant—a faint amusement in his half-closed eyes—and resumed his reading.

"Oh, don't read!" she said desperately. "The train doesn't stop for hours. Surely you won't keep three hours' silence with an old acquaintance just because——"

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"Reached out a timid hand towards him."

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He laid down the book at once.

"I beg your pardon," he said courteously. "You were so well provided with travelling companions that I feared to force the conversation of another on you."

His glance rested on her papers for an instant, and—for a longer instant—on the violets.

She laid the flowers on the cushion beside her.

"I am going to be married on Monday," she said abruptly.

"Christmas Day," he said smiling. "A thousand congratulations. A curious day, though, to have chosen."

"*He* chose it," she said, "and I could not——"

"*He* chose it? He makes the most of his privileges. And so you are to be Mrs.——?"

"I am to be Lady Leamington," she said.

"You are going to marry *him?*" The scorn in his voice stung her like a whip.

She raised her head proudly.

"I consider myself extremely fortunate," she said, and took up the *Nineteenth Century*.

And now it was he who watched her, with a gaze so fixed that she felt it in every nerve. Suddenly he shrugged his shoulders and moved to the seat opposite hers. She drew back her skirt, as if from contamination. Then he spoke.

"Of all the virtues, I have always supposed reticence to be the most admirable, as it is the rarest. I have striven to practise it. Therefore, when you broke off our engagement, I did not seek to justify myself. Pride may have been for something in my silence also—I scorn to deny it. I own that my pride suffered when I found that you could throw me away at the first word from a stranger."

She made a movement to speak, but he went on: "It was foolish, I admit; but, you see, I thought you loved me. You must make allowance for the other delusions that followed on that. The point is that I was not going to defend myself, since you—who ought to have defended me—if you had loved me, I mean, of course—set yourself as my accuser. But that's all over, thank God! I can now feel a sincere, if slight, interest in your welfare—as an old friend; and I think I ought to tell you the unpleasant truth about Lord Leamington, your fortunate bridegroom."

"I wish you wouldn't talk like a book," she said. "If you want to abuse my future husband, do it in plain English."

"I will," he said. "He told you that he found a girl in my rooms at midnight, and that her arms were round my neck. You asked me if this were true. I admitted it. You asked for no explanation, and I gave none."

"*No* explanation," she began angrily, "could have——"

"No—I know; but now it is different. I can't let an old friend marry that man in ignorance of the facts. He had arranged to call for me at twelve; I had an article to finish, and we were going on to the Somersets' ball. At about a quarter to twelve, I opened the door to a knock. It was not Leamington, but this girl. I knew her very slightly. She had lost her last train to Putney, or Peckham, or somewhere—would I help her? It was like a scene in a play, don't you know. I was Discretion absolute—left the door open—gave her wine and biscuits, and proposed to charter a homeward cab for her. Then came Leamington's step on the stair, and at that, as at a signal, she flung her arms round my neck. I should feel like a hairdresser's apprentice in telling you this, but I know now why it was done. It was Leamington's last cast for you; and he threw the double six, confound him!"

She looked at him with shining eyes.

"Is this true?" she said. "Why didn't you tell me before?"

"You never asked me."

"It is only your word against his——"

"After a few years of married life, you will be better able to judge of their relative values," he said, leaning back in his corner.

She lifted the violets to her face—the cool freshness of them was like a child's kiss.

"Charles," she said softly, and threw the violets out at the open window.

He smiled. "So he did give you the violets? And you believe my word, and not his."

"Charles," she said again, and reached out a timid hand towards him.

His face grew stiff and set.

"You understand my motives?" he said coldly. "I could not see any old friend married to a liar and a blackguard without a word of warning."

"I was only—I wanted to shake hands with my old friend—to show that he forgives me." She hardly knew what she was saying.

He touched her hand for a moment and let it drop.

"There is nothing to forgive," he said. "I had almost forgotten the circumstance till your face reminded me of it."

"You are cruel" she said, "and not

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"Presently in the darkness a match spurted."

even polite. Why haven't you punished him?"

"I punched his head," he said coolly. "One does not go further on such slight quarrels."

"You are positively insulting," she said.

"I think I meant to be. I beg your pardon. You should be flattered. Correctly analysed, my rudeness should show you that my vanity still suffers at the touch of a careless hand."

She looked appealingly at him and presently spoke—

"Charles, couldn't you forgive me? Don't you love me at all now?"

He smiled kindly at her. "My dear lady, all is forgiven—and forgotten!"

She turned her head to the window, so that he should not see her eyes. With a shriek and a rumble the train passed into a tunnel. The roar of it rang in her ears, and the tears ran down her face on to the sables. Two shrieks from the engine—the train quivered and shook with the sudden stress of the brakes. Then came another shriek, a crash—and—the biggest accident of the year, as the Northern express ran full into the rear lights of the slow local.

The first-class carriage where pride and love had fought lay battered and overturned on the up-line. The deafening noise of steam, the clamour of voices, the wailing of children, the cries of women, rang out in the arch of the tunnel. But in the first-class carriage there was silence, and darkness, for with the shock all the lights had gone out.

Presently in the darkness a match spurted. He raised himself on one elbow and tried to drag his other arm from under the wood that imprisoned it. The arm was tightly wedged, and he felt that it was broken. He lit another match, his teeth set in agony, and looked round for her. She was lying quite near him, yet not within reach, all twisted up, a heap of dark cloth and furs. Her eyes were closed, and there was blood on the ghastly white of her face.

"My darling! my darling!" he cried, and with that he tore at his imprisoned arm to free it—that he might get to her—fought and tore till from sheer pain he went out of life.

* * * * *

When the sufferers were one by one drawn out of the wreck, he and she were among the last to be released. He regained his consciousness in the anguish of that release.

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They bound up his arm and her head, and, clinging to each other, they tottered out of the tunnel by the light of the torches and climbed into the relief train. It was crowded with pale, bandaged faces and limbs swathed in white.

"I shall get out at the first station," he said, and his voice was coldly polite. "By the way, I didn't quite understand. *Does* your wedding take place on Christmas morning?"

She leaned a little against his uninjured shoulder, and so closely was the carriage packed that he could not draw away.

"If you wish it," she said.

"I beg your pardon?" he questioned courteously.

"Oh, hush!" she whispered. "You cannot go on pretending any more now. When you thought I was dead, you called me your darling. Do you remember?"

"You are mistaken," he said, but she answered with eyes that laughed at him from under the white bandage.

"Don't scowl at me. I am not a bit afraid of you. Nothing matters now I know that you love me. You will see—I shall have everything my own way. Dear, put the naughty, black dog up the chimney; I have no pride now—I am going to be your darling——"

Under the sables, her hand, in its torn, grimy glove slipped into his. He clasped it and: "You have exorcised the devil," he said softly, and her fingers clung to his.

"Say it again—now you know that I am not dead."

So he whispered in her ear in that crowded carriage the most banal of love's banalities: "My darling!" and then for a time they spoke no more.

It was at the first stopping-place that he said: "I had better come home with you and explain to your people the immutable nature of our intentions."

"Yes," she said.

"And you must telegraph to Lord Leamington. Writing won't do—a wire the moment the offices are open."

"Yes."

"And—my darling—Christmas Day is a very good day to be married on——"

"Yes——"

"Yes, what?"

"Yes, my darling!"

THE PROCESSION.

THE grey year drifted out,
As a tired love might go,
And there was no heart to breathe a song
Across the leagues of snow;
Oh, the grey, sad year went out, went out,
And who was there to know?

The glad new year came in,
As a white young love might come,
And through all the world there was the sound
Of welcoming bell and drum;
Oh, the glad new year came in, came in,
And hearts with joy grew dumb.

But the new year shall go out,
As the old year went its way;
And the young love must grow very old,
Yea, old and wan and grey;
And thus shall it be till Time and Love
Die on a Winter's day.

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.

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HIS WORSHIP THE GOOSEDRIVER

By ARNOLD BENNETT.*

IT was an amiable but deceitful afternoon in the third week of December. Snow fell heavily in the windows of confectioners' shops; and Father Christmas smiled, in Keats's Bazaar, the fawning smile of a myth who knows himself to be exploded; but beyond these and similar efforts to remedy the forgetfulness of a careless climate, there was no sign anywhere in the Five Towns, and especially in Bursley, of the immediate approach of the season of peace, goodwill, and gluttony on earth.

At "The Tiger," next door to Keats's, in the Market Place, Mr. Josiah Topham Curtenty had put down his glass (the port was kept specially for him) and told his boon-companion, Mr. Gordon, that he must be going. These two men had one powerful sentiment in common—they loved the same woman. Mr. Curtenty, aged twenty-six in heart, thirty-six in mind, and forty-six in looks, was fifty-six only in years. He was a rich man. He had made money as an earthenware manufacturer in the good old times before Satan was ingenious enough to invent German competition, American tariffs, and the price of coal. He was still making money, with the aid of his son Henry, who now managed the works, but he never admitted that he was making it. No one has yet succeeded, and no one will ever succeed, in catching an earthenware manufacturer in the act of making money. He may confess with a sigh that he has performed the feat in the past, he may give utterance to a vague, preposterous hope that he will perform it again in the remote future; but as for surprising him in the very act, you would as easily surprise a hen laying an egg. Nowadays, Mr. Curtenty, commercially secure, spent most of his energy in helping to shape and control the high destinies of the town. He was Deputy-Mayor and Chairman of the General Purposes Committee of the Town Council. He was also a Guardian of the Poor, a Justice of the Peace, President of the Society for the Prosecution of Felons, a sidesman, an Oddfellow, and several other things that meant dining, shrewdness, and good nature. He was a short, stiff, stout, red-faced man, jolly with the jollity that springs from a kind heart, a humorous disposition, a perfect digestion, and the respectful deference of one's bank manager. Without being a member of the Browning Society, he held firmly to the belief that all's right with the world.

Mr. Gordon, who has but a sorry part in the drama, was a younger, quieter, less forceful person, rather shy—a municipal mediocrity, perhaps a little inflated that day by reason of his having been elected to the chairmanship of the Gas and Lighting Committee. Both men had sat on their committees at the Town Hall across the way that deceitful afternoon, and we see them now, after refreshment well earned and consumed, about to separate and sink into private life.

But as they came out into the portico of "The Tiger," the famous Calypso-like barmaid of "The Tiger" a hovering enchantment in the background, it occurred that a flock of geese were meditating, as geese will, in the middle of the road. The gooseherd, a shabby, middle-aged man, looked as though he had recently lost the battle of Marathon, and was asking himself whether the path of his retreat might not lie through the bar-parlour of "The Tiger."

"Business pretty good?" Mr. Curtenty inquired of him cheerfully. In the Five Towns, business takes the place of weather as a topic of salutation.

"Business?" echoed the gooseherd.

In that unassisted noun, scorning the aid of verb, adjective, or adverb, the gooseherd, by a masterpiece of profound and subtle emphasis, contrived to express the fact that he existed in a world of dead illusions, that he had become a convert to Schopenhauer, and that Mr. Curtenty's inapposite geniality was a final grievance to him.

"There ain't no business," he added.

"Ah!" returned Mr. Curtenty, thoughtful. Such an assertion of the entire absence of business was a reflection upon the town.

"Sithee!" said the gooseherd in ruthless accents, "I druv these 'ere geese into this 'ere

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town this morning." (Here he exaggerated the number of miles traversed.) "Twelve geese and two gander — a Brent and a Barnacle. And how many is there now? How many——"

"Fourteen," said Mr. Gordon, having counted; and Mr. Curtenty gazed at him in reproach for that he, a Town Councillor, had thus mathematically demonstrated the commercial decadence of Bursley.

"Market overstocked, eh?" Mr. Curtenty suggested, throwing a side glance at Callear's, the poulterer's close by, which was crammed with everything that flew, swam, or waddled.

"Call this a market?" said the gooseherd. "I'st tak my lot over to Hanbridge, wheer there *is* a bit doing, by all accounts."

Now, Mr. Curtenty had not the least intention of buying those geese; but nothing could be better calculated to straighten the back of a Bursley man than a reference to the mercantile activity of Hanbridge, that Chicago of the Five Towns.

"How much for the lot?" he inquired. In that moment he reflected upon his reputation; he knew that he was a cure, a card, a character; he knew that everyone would think it just like Jos Curtenty, the renowned Deputy-Mayor of Bursley, to stand on the steps of "The Tiger" and pretend to chaffer with a gooseherd for a flock of geese. His imagination caught the sound of an oft-repeated inquiry: "Did ye hear about old Jos's latest—trying to buy them there geese?" And the appreciative laughter that would follow.

The gooseherd faced him in silence.

"Well," said Mr. Curtenty again, his eyes twinkling, "how much for the lot?"

The gooseherd gloomily and suspiciously named a sum.

Mr. Curtenty named a sum startlingly less, ending in sixpence.

"I'll tak it," said the gooseherd, in a tone that closed on the bargain like a vice.

The Deputy-Mayor perceived himself the owner of twelve geese and two ganders—one Brent, one Barnacle. It was a shock, but he sustained it. Involuntarily he looked at Mr. Gordon.

"How are you going to get 'em home, Curtenty?" asked Gordon, with coarse sarcasm. "Drive 'em?"

Nettled, Mr. Curtenty retorted: "Now, then, Gas Gordon——"

The barmaid laughed aloud at this sobriquet, which, that same evening, was all over the town, and which has stuck ever since to the chairman of the Gas and Lighting Committee. Mr. Gordon wished, and has never ceased to wish, either that he had been elected to some other committee, or that his name had begun with some other letter.

The gooseherd received the purchase-money like an affront; but when Mr. Curtenty, full of private mirth, said: "Chuck us your stick in," he gave him the stick and smiled under reservation. Jos Curtenty had no use for the geese; he could conceive no purpose which they might be made to serve, no smallest corner for them in his universe. Nevertheless, since he had rashly stumbled into a ditch, he determined to emerge from it grandly, impressively, magnificently. He instantaneously formed a plan by which he would snatch victory out of defeat. He would take Gordon's suggestion and himself drive the geese up to his residence in Hillport, that lofty and aristocratic suburb. It would be an immense, an unparalleled farce—a wonder, a topic for years, the crown of his reputation as a card.

He announced his intention with that misleading sobriety and ordinariness of tone which it has been the foible of many great humorists to assume. Mr. Gordon lifted his head several times very quickly, as if to say: "What next?" and then actually departed, which was a clear proof that the man had no imagination and no soul. The gooseherd winked.

"You be rightly called Curtenty, mester," said he, and passed into "The Tiger."

"That's the best joke I ever heard," Jos said to himself. "I wonder whether he saw it."

Then the procession of the geese and the Deputy-Mayor commenced. Now, it is not to be assumed that Mr. Curtenty was necessarily bound to look foolish in the driving of geese. He was no nincompoop. On the contrary, he was one of those men who, bringing common-sense and presence of mind to every action of their lives, do nothing badly and always escape the ridiculous. He marshalled his geese with notable gumption, adopting towards them exactly the correct stress of persuasion, and presently he smiled to see them preceding him in the direction of Hillport. He looked neither to right nor left, but simply at his geese, and thus the quidnuncs of the Market Place and the supporters of shop-fronts were unable to catch his eye. He tried to feel like a gooseherd; and, such was his histrionic quality, his instinct for the dramatic, he *was* a gooseherd, despite his blue Melton overcoat, his

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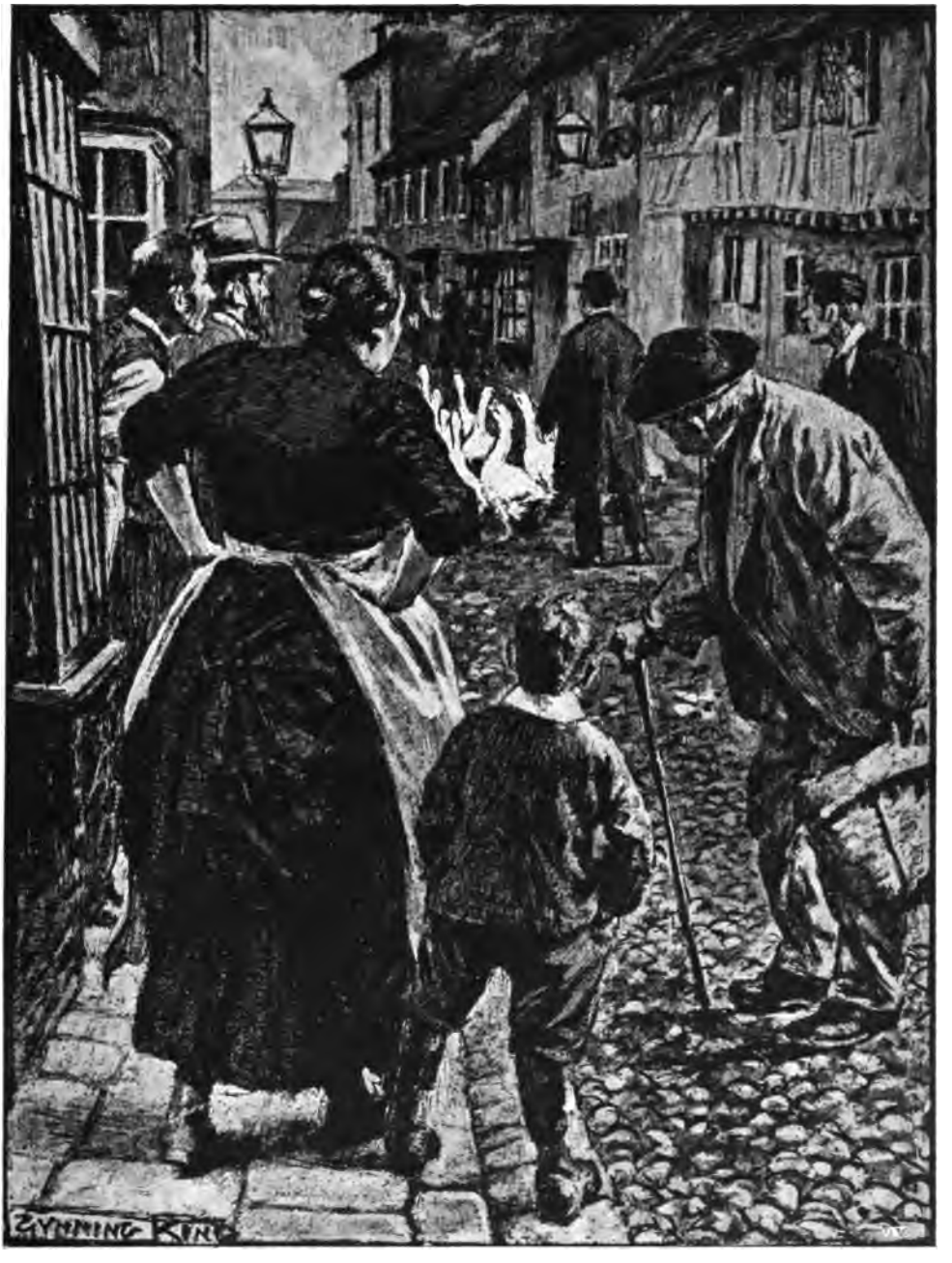

"At every corner was a knot of people."

hard felt hat with the flattened top, and that opulent-curving collar which was the secret despair of the young dandies of Hillport. He had the most natural air in the world. The geese were the victims of this imaginative effort of Mr. Curtenty's. They took him seriously as a gooseherd. These fourteen intelligences, each with an object in life, each bent on self-aggrandisement and the satisfaction of desires, began to follow the line of least resistance in regard to the superior intelligence unseen but felt behind them, feigning, as geese will, that it suited them so to submit, and that in reality they

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were still quite independent. But in the peculiar eye of the Barnacle gander, who was leading, an observer with sufficient fancy might have deciphered a mild revolt against this triumph of the absurd, the accidental, and the futile—a passive yet Promethean spiritual defiance of the supreme powers.

Mr. Curtenty got his fourteen intelligences safely across the top of St. Luke's Square and gently urged them into the steep defile of Oldcastle Street. By this time rumour had passed in front of him and run off down side-streets like water let into an irrigation system. At every corner was a knot of people, at most windows a face. And the Deputy-Mayor never spoke nor smiled. The farce was enormous; the memory of it would survive revolutions and religions.

Half-way down Oldcastle Street, the first disaster happened. Electric tramways had not then knitted the Five Towns in a network of steel; but the last word of civilisation and refinement was about to be uttered, and a gang of men were making patterns with wires on the skyscape of Oldcastle Street. One of the wires, slipping from its temporary gripper, swirled, with an extraordinary sound, into the roadway, and writhed there in spirals. Several of Mr. Curtenty's geese were knocked down, and rose, obviously annoyed; but the Barnacle gander fell with a clinging circle of wire round his muscular glossy neck, and did not rise again. It was a violent, mysterious, agonising, and sudden death for him, and must have confirmed his theories about the arbitrariness of things. The thirteen passed pitilessly on. Mr. Curtenty freed the gander from the coiling wire and picked it up; but finding it far too heavy to carry, he handed it to a Corporation road-sweeper. "I'll send for it," he said. "Wait here." These were the only words uttered by him during a memorable journey.

The second disaster was that the deceitful afternoon turned to rain—cold, cruel rain, persistent rain, full of sinister significance. Mr. Curtenty ruefully raised the velvet of his Melton. As he did so, a brougham rolled into Oldcastle Street, a little in front of him, from the direction of St. Peter's Church, and vanished towards Hillport. He knew the carriage; he had bought it and paid for it.

Deep, far down in his mind, stirred the thought: "I'm just the least bit glad she didn't see me."

He had the suspicion, which recurs even to optimists, that happiness is, after all, a chimera.

The third disaster was that the sun set and darkness descended. Mr. Curtenty had, unfortunately, not reckoned with this diurnal phenomenon; he had not thought upon the undesirability of being under compulsion to drive geese by the sole illumination of gas-lamps lighted by Corporation gas.

After this, disasters multiplied. Dark and the rain had transformed the farce into something else. It was 5.30 when at last he reached "The Firs," and the garden of "The Firs" was filled with lamentable complainings of a remnant of geese. His man, Pond, met him with a stable lantern.

"Damp, sir," said Pond.

"Oh, nowt to speak of!" said Mr. Curtenty, and, taking off his hat, he shot the fluid contents of the brim into Pond's face. It was his way of dotting the "i" of irony. "Missis come in?"

"Yes, sir; I have but just rubbed the horse down."

So far no reference to the surrounding geese, all forlorn in the heavy winter rain.

"I've gotten a two-three geese and one gander here for Christmas," said Mr. Curtenty after a pause. To inferiors he always used the dialect.

"Yes, sir."

"Turn 'em into th' orchard, as you call it."

"Yes, sir."

"They aren't all here. Thou mun put th' horse in the trap and fetch the rest thysen."

"Yes, sir."

"One's dead. A roadman's takkin' care on it in Oldcastle Street. He'll wait for thee. Give him sixpence."

"Yes, sir."

"There's another got into th' cut" (canal).

"Yes, sir."

"There's another strayed on the railway line—happen it's run over by this."

"Yes, sir."

"And one's making the best of her way to Oldcastle. I couldna coax her in here."

"Yes, sir."

"Collect 'em."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Curtenty walked away towards the house.

"Mester!" Pond called after him, flashing the lantern.

"Well, lad?"

"There's no gander i' this lot."

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"Hast forgotten to count thysen," Mr. Curtenty answered blithely from the shelter of the side-door.

But within himself he was a little crest-fallen to think that the surviving gander should have escaped his vigilance, even in the darkness. He had set out to drive the geese home, and he had driven them home—

"'I won't stop, Curtenty.'"

most of them. He had kept his temper, his dignity, his cheerfulness. He had got a bargain in geese. So much was indisputable ground for satisfaction. And yet the feeling of an anti-climax would not be dismissed. Upon the whole, his transit lacked glory. It had begun in splendour, but it had ended in discomfort and almost ignominy. Nevertheless, Mr. Curtenty's unconquerable soul asserted itself in a quite genuine and tuneful whistle as he entered the house.

The fate of the Brent gander was never ascertained.

II.

THE dining-room of "The Firs" was a spacious and inviting refectory which owed nothing of its charm to William Morris, Regent Street, or the Arts and Crafts Society. Its triple aim was richness, solidity, and comfort—but especially comfort, and this aim was achieved in new oak furniture of immovable firmness, in a Turkey carpet which swallowed up the feet like a feather bed, and in large oil-paintings, whose darkly glinting frames were a guarantee of their excellence. On a winter's night, as now, the room was at its richest, solidest, most comfortable. The blue plush curtains were drawn on their stout brass rods across door and French window. Finest selected Silkstone fizzed and flamed in a patent grate which had the extraordinary gift of radiating heat into the apartment instead of up the chimney. The shaded Welsbach lights of the chandelier cast a dazzling luminance on the tea-table of snow and silver, while leaving the pictures in a gloom so discreet that not Ruskin himself could have decided whether these were by Whistler or Peter Paul Rubens. On either side of the marble mantelpiece were two easy-chairs of an immense, incredible capacity—chairs of crimson plush for Titans, chairs softer than moss, more pliant than a loving heart, more enveloping than a caress. In one of these chairs, that to the left of the fireplace, Mr. Curtenty was accustomed to snore every Saturday and Sunday afternoon, and almost every evening. The other was usually empty, but to-night it was occupied by Mrs. Curtenty, the jewel of the casket. (In the presence of her husband she always used a small rocking-chair of ebonised cane.)

To glance at this short, slight, yet plump little creature as she reclined crosswise in the vast chair, leaving great spaces of the seat unfilled, was to think rapturously to oneself: "*This is a woman.*" Her fluffy head was such a dot against the back of the chair; the curve of her chubby, ringed hand above the head was so adorable; her black eyes were so provocative; her slippered feet so wee; yes, and there was something so mysteriously thrilling about the fall of her skirt that you knew instantly her name was Clara, her temper both fiery and obstinate, and her personality distracting. You knew

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that she was one of those women of frail physique who can endure fatigues that would destroy a camel; one of those demonic women capable of doing without sleep for ten nights in order to nurse you, capable of dying and seeing you die rather than give way about the tint of a necktie, capable of laughter and tears simultaneously, capable of never being in the wrong except for the idle whim of so being. She had a big mouth and very wide nostrils. And her years were thirty-five—it was no matter; it would have been no matter had she been a hundred and thirty-five. In short——

Clara Curtenty wore tight-fitting, black silk, with a long, gold chain that descended from her neck nearly to her waist, and was looped up in the middle to an old-fashioned gold brooch. She was in mourning for a distant relative. Black pre-eminently suited her. Consequently her distant relatives died at frequent intervals.

The basalt clock on the mantelpiece trembled and burst into the song of six. Clara Curtenty rose swiftly from the easy-chair and took her seat in front of the tea-tray. Almost at the same moment a neat, black-and-white parlourmaid brought in teapot, copper kettle, and a silver-covered dish containing hot pikelets; then departed. Clara was alone again. Not the same Clara now, but a personage demure, prim, precise, frightfully upright of back—a sort of impregnable stronghold; without doubt a deputy-mayoress.

At five past six, Josiah Curtenty entered the room, radiant from a hot bath and happy in dry clothes—a fine if mature figure of a man. His presence filled the whole room.

"Well, my chuck!" he said, and kissed her on the cheek.

She gazed at him with a look that might mean anything. Did she raise her cheek to his greeting, or was it a fancy that she had endured, rather than accepted, his kiss? He was scarcely sure. And if she had endured instead of accepting the kiss, was her mood to be attributed to his lateness for tea, or to the fact that she was aware of the episode of the geese. He could not divine.

"Pikelets! Good!" he exclaimed, taking the cover off the dish.

This strong, successful, and dominant man adored his wife and went in fear of her. She was his first love, but his second spouse. They had been married ten years. In those ten years they had quarrelled only five times, had changed the very colour of his life. Till his second marriage he had boasted that he belonged to the people and retained the habits of the people. Clara, though she also belonged to the people, very soon altered all that. Clara had a passion for the genteel. Like many warm-hearted, honest, clever, and otherwise sensible persons, Clara was a snob, but a charming little snob. She ordered him to forget that he belonged to the people; she refused to listen when he talked in the dialect; she made him dress with opulence and even with tidiness; she made him buy a fashionable house and fill it with fine furniture; she made him buy a brougham, in which her gentility could pay calls and do shopping (she shopped in Oldcastle, where an aristocracy of tradesmen sneered at Hanbridge's lack of style); she had her "day"; she taught the servants to enter the reception-rooms without knocking; she took tea in bed in the morning, and tea in the afternoon in the drawing-room. She would have instituted dinner at seven, but she was a wise woman and realised that too much tyranny often means revolution and the crumbling of thrones; therefore, the ancient, plebeian custom of high-tea at six was allowed to persist and continue.

She it was who had compelled Josiah (or bewitched, beguiled, coaxed, and wheedled him), after a public refusal, to accept the unusual post of Deputy-Mayor. In two years' time he might count on being Mayor. Why, then, should Clara have been so anxious for this secondary dignity? Because in that year of royal festival, Bursley, in common with many other boroughs, had had a fancy to choose a Mayor out of the House of Lords. The Earl of Chell, a magnate of the county, had consented to wear the mayoral chain and dispense the mayoral hospitalities, on condition that he was provided with a deputy for daily use.

It was the idea of herself being deputy to the lovely, meddlesome, and arrogant Countess of Chell that had appealed to Clara.

The deputy of a countess at length spoke.

"Will Harry be late at the works again to-night?" she asked, in her colder, small-talk manner, which committed her to nothing, as Josiah well knew.

Her way of saying that word "Harry" was inimitably significant. She gave it an air. She liked Harry, and she liked Harry's name because it had a Kensingtonian sound. Harry, so accomplished in business, was also a dandy, and he was a dog. "My stepson!"—she loved to introduce him, so tall, manly, distinguished and dandiacal. Harry,

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enriched by his own mother, belonged to a London club; he ran down to Llandudno for week-ends; and it was reported that he had been behind the scenes at the Alhambra. . . . Clara felt for the word "Harry" the unreasoning affection which most women lavish on "George."

"Like as not," said Josiah. "I haven't been to the works this afternoon."

Another silence fell, and then Josiah, feeling himself unable to bear any further suspense as to his wife's real mood and temper, suddenly determined to tell her all about the geese and know the worst. And precisely at the instant that he opened his mouth, the maid opened the door and announced—

"Mr. Duncalf wishes to see you at once, sir; he won't keep you a minute."

"Ask him in here, Mary," said the Deputy-Mayoress sweetly; "and bring another cup and saucer."

Mr. Duncalf was the Town Clerk of Bursley—legal, portly, dry, and a little shy.

"I won't stop, Curtenty—how d'ye do, Mrs. Curtenty?—no, thanks, really——" But she, smiling, exquisitely gracious, flattered and smoothed him into a chair.

"Any interesting news, Mr. Duncalf?" she said; and added: "But we're glad that *anything* should have brought you in——"

"Well," said Duncalf, "I've just had a letter by the afternoon post from Lord Chell."

"Oh, the Earl! Indeed! How very interesting!"

"What's he after?" inquired Josiah cautiously.

"He says he's just been appointed Governor of East Australia—announcement'll be in to-morrow's papers—and so he must regretfully resign the mayoralty. Says he'll pay the fine; but, of course, we shall have to remit that by special resolution of the Council."

"Well, I'm hanged!" Josiah exclaimed.

"Topham!" Mrs. Curtenty remonstrated, but with a delightful, acquitting dimple. She never would call him Josiah, much less Jos. Topham came more easily to her lips, and sometimes Top.

"Your husband," said Mr. Duncalf impressively to Clara, "will, of course, have to step into the Mayor's shoes, and you'll have to fill the place of the Countess." He paused and added: "And very well you'll do it, too; very well! Nobody better!"

The Town Clerk frankly admired Clara.

"Mr. Duncalf! Mr. Duncalf!" she raised a finger at him. "You are the most shameless flatterer in the town."

The flatterer was flattered. Having delivered the weighty news, he had leisure to savour his own importance as the bearer of it. He drank a cup of tea. Josiah was thoughtful, but Clara brimmed over with a fascinating loquacity. Then Mr. Duncalf said that he must really be going, and having arranged with the Mayor-elect to call a special meeting of the Council at once, he did go—all the while wishing he had the enterprise to stay.

Josiah accompanied him to the front door. The sky had now cleared.

"Thank ye for calling," said the host.

"Oh, that's all right! Good night, Curtenty. Got that goose out of the canal?"

So the story was all abroad!

Josiah returned to the dining-room, imperceptibly smiling. At the door, the sight of his wife halted him. The face of that precious and adorable woman flamed out lightnings and all menace and offence. Her louring eyes showed what a triumph of dissimulation she must have achieved in presence of Mr. Duncalf, but now she could speak her mind.

"Yes, Topham," she exploded, as though finishing a harangue. "And on this day of all days you choose to drive geese in the public road behind my carriage!"

Jos was stupefied, annihilated.

"Did you see me, then, Clarry?" He vainly tried to carry it off.

"Did I see you? Of course I saw you!" She withered him up with the hot wind of scorn.

"Well," he said foolishly, "how was I to know that the Earl would resign just to-day?"

"How were you to——?"

Harry came in for his tea. He glanced from one to the other, discreet, silent. On the way home he had heard the tale of the geese in seven different forms. The Deputy-Mayor, so soon to be Mayor, walked out of the room, crushed.

"Pond has just come back, father," said Harry. "I drove up the hill with him."

And as Josiah hesitated a moment in the hall, he heard Clara exclaim: "Oh! Harry——!"

"Hang it!" he murmured.

III.

THE *Signal* of the following day contained the announcement which Mr. Duncalf had

forecast. It also stated on authority that Mr. Josiah Curtenty would wear the mayoral chain of Bursley immediately, and added as its own private opinion that, in default of the Right Honourable the Earl of Chell and his Countess, no better "civic heads" could have been found than Mr. Curtenty and his charming wife. So far the tone of the *Signal* was unimpeachable. But underneath all this was a sub-title: "Amusing Exploit of the Mayor-elect," followed by a facetious and rather mordant description of the procession of the geese, a description which concluded by referring to Mr. Curtenty as his Worship the Goosedriver. Hanbridge, Knype, Longshaw, and Turnhill laughed heartily, and perhaps a little viciously, at this paragraph, but Bursley was annoyed by it. In print the affair did not look at all well. Bursley prided itself on possessing a unique dignity as the "Mother of the Five Towns," and to be presided over by a goosedriver, however humorous and hospitable he might be, did not consort with that dignity. A certain Mayor of Longshaw, years before, had driven a sow to market and derived a tremendous advertisement therefrom, but Bursley had no wish to rival Longshaw in any particular. Bursley regarded Longshaw as the *inferno* of the Five Towns. In Bursley you were bidden to go to Longshaw as you were bidden to go to —— Certain acute people in Hillport saw nothing but a paralysing insult in the opinion of the *Signal* (first and foremost a Hanbridge organ) that Bursley could find no better civic head than Josiah Curtenty. At least three Aldermen and seven Councillors privately, and in "The Tiger," disagreed with any such view of Bursley's capacity to find heads.

And underneath all this brooding dissatisfaction lurked the thought, as the alligator lurks in a muddy river, that "the Earl wouldn't like it," meaning the geese episode. It was generally felt that the Earl had been badly treated by Jos Curtenty. The town could not explain its sentiments, could not argue about them; they were not, in fact, capable of logical justification. But they were there; they violently existed. It would have been useless to point out that if the inimitable Jos had not been called to the mayoralty, the episode of the geese would have passed as a gorgeous joke; that everyone had been vastly amused by it until that desolating issue of the *Signal* announced the Earl's retirement; that Jos Curtenty could not possibly have foreseen what was about to happen; and that, anyhow, goosedriving was less a crime than a social solecism, and less a social solecism than a brilliant eccentricity. Bursley was hurt, and logic is no balm for wounds.

Some may ask: If Bursley was offended, why did it not mark its sense of Josiah's failure to read the future by electing another Mayor? The answer is that while all were agreed that his antic was inexcusable, all were equally agreed to pretend that it was a mere trifle of no importance. You cannot deprive a man of his prescriptive right for a mere trifle of no importance. Besides, nobody could be so foolish as to imagine that goosedriving, though reprehensible in a mayor about to succeed an earl, is an act of which official notice can be taken.

The most curious thing in the whole *imbroglio* is that Josiah Curtenty secretly agreed with his wife and the town. He was ashamed, overset. His procession of geese appeared to him in an entirely new light, and he had the strength of mind to admit to himself: "I've made a fool of myself."

Harry went to London for a week, and Josiah, under plea of his son's absence, spent eight hours a day at the works. The brougham remained in the coach-house.

The Town Council duly met in special conclave, and Josiah Topham Curtenty became Mayor of Bursley.

Shortly after Christmas it was announced that the Mayor and Mayoress had decided to give a New Year's treat to four hundred poor old people in the St. Luke's covered market. It was also spread about that this treat would eclipse and extinguish the memory of all previous treats of a similar nature, and that it might be accepted as some slight foretaste of the hospitality which the Mayor and Mayoress would dispense in that notable year of royal festival. The treat was to occur on the 9th of January, the Mayoress's birthday.

On the 7th of January, Josiah happened to go home early. He was proceeding into the drawing-room, without enthusiasm, to greet his wife, when he heard voices within; and one voice was the voice of Gas Gordon.

Jos stood still. It has been mentioned that Gordon and the Mayor were in love with the same woman. The Mayor had easily captured her under the very guns of his not formidable rival, and he had always thereafter felt a kind of benevolent, good-humoured, contemptuous pity for Gordon—Gordon, whose life was a tragic blank, Gordon, who lived, a melancholy and defeated

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"The Deputy-Mayor, so soon to be Mayor, walked out of the room, crushed."

bachelor, with his mother and two unmarried sisters older than himself. That Gordon still worshipped at the shrine did not disturb him; on the contrary, it pleased him. Poor Gordon!

"But, really, Mrs. Curtenty," Gordon was saying, "really, you know, I—that is—really——"

"To please me!" Mrs. Curtenty entreated, with a seductive charm that Jos felt even outside the door. Then there was a pause.

"Very well!" said Gordon.

Mr. Curtenty tiptoed away and back into the street. He walked in the dark nearly to Oldcastle and returned about six o'clock. But Clara said no word of Gordon's visit. She had scarcely spoken to Topham for three weeks.

The next morning, as Harry was departing to the works, Mrs. Curtenty followed the handsome youth into the hall.

"Harry," she whispered, "bring me two ten-pound notes this afternoon, will you, and say nothing to your father."

Gas Gordon was to be on the platform at the poor people's treat. As he walked down Trafalgar Road, his eye caught a still-exposed fragment of a decayed bill on a hoarding. It referred to a meeting of the local branch of the Anti-Gambling League, a year ago, in the Lecture Hall of the Wesleyan Chapel, and it said that Councillor Gordon would occupy the chair on that occasion. Mechanically, Councillor Gordon stopped and tore the fragment away from the hoarding.

The treat, which took the form of a dinner, was an unqualified success; it surpassed all expectations. Even the diners themselves were satisfied a rare thing at such affairs. Goose was a prominent item in the *menu*. After the repast, the replete guests were

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entertained from the platform, the Mayor being, of course, in the chair. Harry sang "In Old Madrid," accompanied by his stepmother, with faultless expression. Mr. Duncalf astonished everybody with the famous North-country recitation, "The Patent Hair-Brushing Mashane." There were also a banjo solo, a skirt-dance of discretion, and a campanological turn. At last, towards ten o'clock, Mr. Gordon, who had hitherto done nothing, rose in his place, amid good-natured cries of "Gas!"

"I feel sure you will all agree with me," he began, "that this evening would not be complete without a vote of thanks, a very hearty vote of thanks, to our excellent host and chairman."

Ear-splitting applause.

"I've got a little story to tell you," he continued, "a story that up to this moment has been a close secret between his Worship the Mayor and myself." His Worship looked up sharply at the speaker. "You've heard about some geese, I reckon. (Laughter.) Well, you've not heard all, but I'm going to tell you. I can't keep it to myself any longer. You think his Worship drove those geese—I hope they're digesting well (loud laughter)—just for fun. He didn't. I was with him when he bought them, and I happened to say that goosedriving was a very difficult accomplishment."

"Depends on the geese," shouted a voice.

"Yes, it does," Mr. Gordon admitted. "Well, his Worship contradicted me, and we had a bit of an argument. I don't bet, as you know—at least, not often—but I don't mind confessing that I offered to bet him a sovereign he couldn't drive his geese half a mile. 'Look here, Gordon,' he said to me, 'there's a lot of distress in the town just now—trade bad,' and so on and so on. 'I'll lay you a level ten pounds I drive these geese to Hillport myself, the loser to give the money to charity.' 'Done,' I said. 'Don't say anything about it,' he says. 'I won't,' I says—but I *am* doing. (Applause.) I feel it my duty to say something about it. (More applause.) Well, I lost, as you all know. He drove 'em to Hillport." ("Good old Jos!") "That's not all. The Mayor insisted on putting his own ten pounds to mine and making it twenty. Here are the two identical notes, his and mine." Mr. Gordon waved the identical notes amid an uproar. "We've decided that everyone who has dined here to-night shall receive a brand new shilling. I see Mr. Septimus Lovatt, from the bank, there, with a bag. He will attend to you as you go out. (Wild outbreak and tumult of rapturous applause.) And now, three cheers for your Mayor and Mayoress."

It was colossal, the enthusiasm.

"*And* for Gas Gordon!" called several voices.

The cheers rose again in surging waves.

Everyone remarked that the Mayor, usually so imperturbable, was quite overcome—seemed as if he didn't know where to look.

Afterwards, as the occupants of the platform descended, Mr. Gordon glanced into the eyes of Mrs. Curtenty and found there his exceeding reward. The mediocrity had blossomed out that evening into something new and strange. Liar, deliberate liar, and self-accused gambler as he was, he felt that he had lived during that speech—he felt that it was the supreme moment of his life.

"What a perfectly wonderful man your husband is!" said Mrs. Duncalf to Mrs. Curtenty. Clara turned to her husband with a sublime gesture of satisfaction. In the brougham, going home, she bewitched him with wifely endearments. She could afford to do so. The stigma of the geese episode was erased!

But the barmaid of "The Tiger," as she let down her bright hair that night in the attic of "The Tiger," said to herself: "Well, of all the——" Just that.

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THE CONQUEST OF THE KITCHEN.

By M. H. Morrison.

THE kitchen and the cook form the pivot of our social life. "We may live," says Owen Meredith—

"We may live without poetry, music, and art;
We may live without conscience and live without heart;
We may live without friends; we may live without books;
But civilised man cannot live without cooks.
He may live without books—what is knowledge but grieving?
He may live without hope—what is hope but deceiving?
He may live without love—what is passion but pining?
But where is the man that can live without dining?"

but elevated the cult of the cuisine into a religion. During three centuries and a half his sway has been undisputed in the gastronomic world. Through all the varying fortunes of their armies French cooks have ever remained "clear, cool, and collected under fire." It is the French who have carried forward from ancient and mediæval times that luxuriant epicurism which has always sooner or later become identified with the dominant empires of history. Xerxes with his victorious army brought the art of cooking into Greece, and nearly ruined those who had the honour of entertaining him.

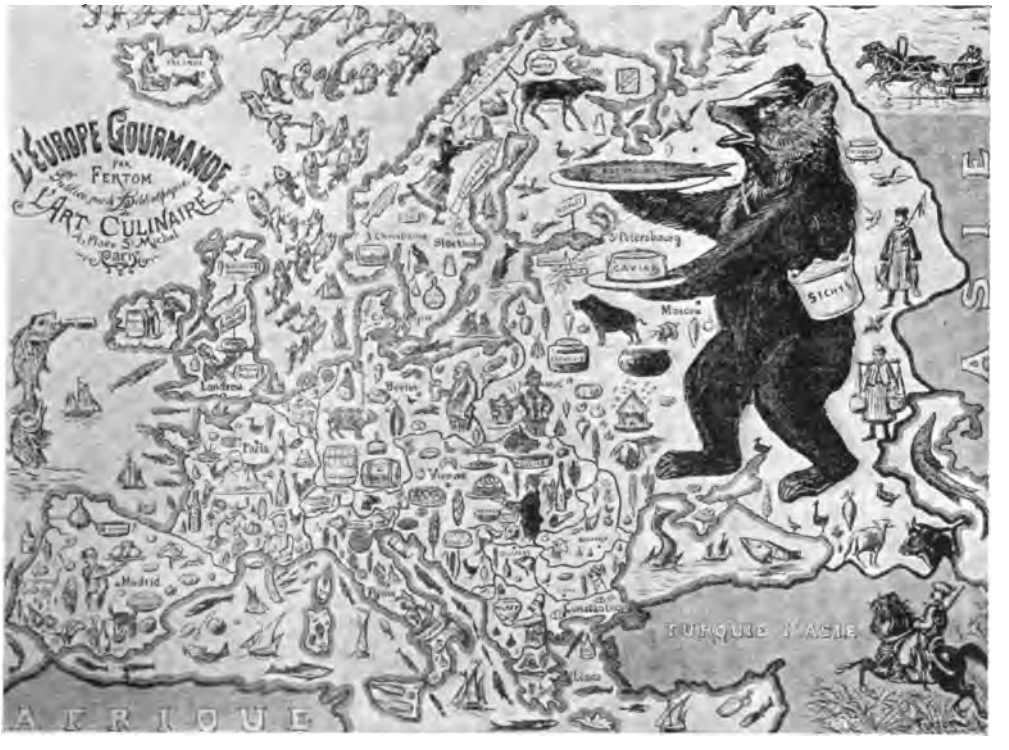

CHART SHOWING TYPES OF FOOD CHIEFLY IDENTIFIED WITH THE VARIOUS PARTS OF EUROPE.

The Hindu goes even further. With him all the operations of the kitchen have religious sanction from the moment that, prior to the preparation of the food, the women bathe and clothe themselves in a clean white garment, till, just before eating, the blessing of some god is invoked. Not far behind is the Frenchman, for he has all

Rome next took up the tale of the kitchen, and, as mistress of the world, ordered for her table every conceivable luxury, from oysters to peacocks' tongues. Soon the tyranny of the table knew no bounds; and inevitable decadence had arrived with the vomitaria, and with the emetics of the glutton Vitellius. But the kitchen again

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A BANQUET IN ANCIENT ROME.

asserted its importance under the Medicis of Florence, who included cookery within their patronage of the fine arts. Thus Catherine of Medici, marrying the King of France, imported the culinary art to the land of her husband, where it fell once more into good stock. Soon lords and ladies of high degree vied with each other in the invention of new dishes, which henceforth bore their names. *Chefs* began to hold an honoured place in society—a place, however, which was no longer theirs with the sweeping away of the old *régime*. But a genius among them conceived the idea of adapting the aristocratic art of the cuisine to the new democracy, and he forthwith opened the first restaurant in 1782.

The culinary influence of the restaurant had scarcely direct influence on the English till we occupied Paris after Waterloo; it was not long, however, before the clubland of London approximated its cuisine to that which obtained in France. Meantime, however, "the solid and uncompromising meals" of our forefathers prevailed, which probably explained "why so few children set eyes upon their grandfathers," says Conan Doyle, in presenting an historic picture of a dinner given by a Buck of the Regency to the Fancy. "Great rounds of beef, saddles of mutton, smoking tongues, veal and ham pies, turkeys and chickens and geese, with every variety of vegetables, and a succession of fiery sherries and heavy ales, were the main staple of the feast. It was the same meal and the same cooking as their Norse or German ancestors might have sat down to fourteen centuries before, and, indeed, as I looked through the steam of the dishes at the lines of fierce and rugged faces, I could have imagined myself at one of the old-world carousals, where the savage company gnawed the joints of the bone, and then, with murderous horseplay, hurled the remains at their prisoners."

This "bill of fare," however, has its points of resemblance with some of the banquets still served in our City, whose Corporation has become synonymous with good feeding. But even here the influence of the French has been felt. Whereas the Lord Mayor's banquet has retained many old traditions, much of the *menu* being in English, the French influence prevails in the banquets served to distinguished personages of our own or of foreign States. On such occasions you can sometimes read in the names of the dishes the successive steps in the career of the distinguished visitor.

Thus the culinary art has followed in the wake of advancing civilisation. True, France still dictates, with a full appreciation of the subtle connection between the two, the language of diplomacy and the cuisine.

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Germany, however, has begun to revolt against the French *menu* in favour of the homely dishes of the Fatherland; and as for Great Britain and the United States, they have turned the cuisine into the abode of science as well as of art. During the last twenty-five years these last-named countries have contributed most of the best improvements to the furniture and fittings of the kitchen; and France, to maintain her culinary skill, has been compelled to use them.

The Oldest London Kitchen.

Perhaps the oldest relic in London of a mediæval kitchen is at Westminster Abbey, though little remains to indicate it save the rubble flooring, the buttery hatch, and an adjoining cellar, now the handsome dining-hall of Canon Wilberforce. The monk who acted as kitchener or refectorian had a responsibility as great as any hotel manager or *chef* in these days. For among his fellow-monks, to say nothing of the pensioners, were critics as keen as any among the world-famed diners of to-day. Yet the Abbey kitchen was scarcely more elaborate than any one of those which linger on in the remote cottages of the rough Cornish coast, or on the Yorkshire moors, where the entire cooking of the family is done on a flat hearth, with no other fuel than turf, or peat, or twigs. The "broth-pot" hangs from a crane, or stands on a tripod, and is most accommodating in its uses. Would you make bread? Lay the dough on a clean iron plate, and invert the broth-pot over it; then heap up all round it your lighted turf or wood.

Workhouse Kitchen.

To pass from such mediæval and rustic simplicity to the simplicity which lurks in the shadow of a complex civilisation, no better instance could be found than the kitchen of a workhouse or prison. It is a significant fact that within the last two or three years remarkable developments and improvements have taken place in the kitchen and cooking arrangements connected

Photo by H. N. King, [*Avenue Road, W.*

THE ROYAL KITCHEN, WINDSOR CASTLE.

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with various departments of the State. In the workhouse as in the prison the whole system has been unified. In both institutions the inmates are carefully classified according to sex, condition of health or age, whether able-bodied or not, and are then fed by measurement or weight of food according to the diet-sheet for each special class. To-day it is incumbent upon the warder who would supervise the prison kitchen to know the proper value of the food put into his charge, and how to prepare it with both nourishment to the prisoners and economy to the State.

As to the culinary improvements that have been forging ahead in our workhouses—not one here and there, but throughout the whole country—they are enough to cause the Bumbledom of other days to turn in its grave. No longer may a wealthy Board pamper their paupers while another matter-of-fact, if not heartless, body of gentlemen leave even the children and the old ill-nourished because in their diet the peculiarities of appetite in youth and age are not considered. Thus a certain picture of Cruikshank's has receded into the dark ages. To-day, if Oliver Twist asked for more, he would not be refused by the workhouse master, though with four meals a day he would be less likely to ask for another helping. For breakfast or supper—according to the regulations, these meals must not be alike on any one day in the week—he has either bread and three-quarters of a pint of pure milk, or bread-and-butter with tea or cocoa that is half pure milk, or porridge served with half-a-pint of milk. Sometimes the butter is omitted, and then the bread is served by turns with rice-milk, dripping, boiled bacon, treacle, jam, butter-milk, cheese, or egg. In the course of the morning they are allowed to have a small piece of cake or biscuit. As to dinner, the children and the aged must have not fewer than three roast or boiled fresh meat meals a week, with the further indulgence as one ration of one of twelve sorts of pudding. On other days the chief course may consist of fish, or tinned meat, or suet pudding, or soup, or stew, or pasties. In regard to the serving of food to children, it is definitely laid down that they shall be fed according to appetite, the master or matron being held responsible for securing that each child receives sufficient at each meal. They are also in summer to provide at discretion stewed fruit, water-cress, lettuce, etc.

Photo by Vandyk, [*Buckingham Palace Road.*

A TABLE TROPHY IN SUGAR-WORK AND BISCUITS.

A warning may here be desirable in the interest of the long-suffering ratepayer. Let not the respectable able-bodied of London rush, say, to Fulham Workhouse and expect this lavish maternal treatment, for beyond two meat meals a week it is made as rigorous as possible with a due regard to health. To provide for 1,500 inmates the kitchen may well be spacious, tiled from floor to ceiling, and well equipped. The "teapot" alone contains 210 gallons. When the water is boiling, a large perforated zinc box containing dry tea and sugar, and locked against pauper assistants, is dropped into the pot.

The Army Cook-house and Field Kitchen.

"An army marches on its stomach." "*C'est la soupe qui fait le soldat.*" These Napoleonic aphorisms, since Soyer's culinary campaign in the Crimea, have been increasingly appreciated by our War Office. But a comparison with the rising standard of living in civil life, and, still more striking, a comparison with the recent improvements

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A SUPPER-TABLE.

introduced into the Navy rations, show that "Tommy" has not yet had his due. But after making these odious comparisons it is but fair to pay a just tribute to all that has been attempted and accomplished by the Army School of Cookery at Aldershot. Sergeant cooks, having here undergone training, carry back to their regiments an admirable "Manual of Military Cooking," the recipes in which are all on a brobding-

Photo by Bartier.] [*East India Road, E.*

A TABLE AT THE COOKERY EXHIBITION.

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nagian scale. The sergeant cook's first lesson is that everything connected with the "cook-house must be scrupulously clean." Back in his kitchen he is expected to instruct his assistants, drawn from the ranks, to see that the dishes are made according to scale, that there is a proper rotation of dietary, and, above all, that the utmost economy is observed, from the coal, charcoal, or peat used—gas is eschewed—to the preservation of dripping drawn from the skimmings of pots and the melting of waste fat. Apparently no arrangements are made for the purchase of such flavouring as mushroom or marigold flowers, or such vegetables as nettles, but "as these are often found growing wild," says the "Manual," the suggestion is that soldiers might make occasional pastoral rambles to collect them!

The Government ration, divided between the three recognised meals—breakfast, dinner, and tea—consists of twelve ounces of meat including bone, and one pound of bread. The meals are prepared in messes of fifty or sixty men. For breakfast, besides tea or coffee and bread, as relish they have *either* of the following: butter, bacon, fish, brawn. For tea the only choice is between butter, jam, dripping, golden syrup. For dinner two courses are always served: meat, one or two vegetables, and *either* soup or pudding. Needless to say, the men, to eke out the evening meal, are obliged to patronise the canteen.

Of far more interest is the "field kitchen," and with a view to all exigencies every soldier is expected to acquire the knowledge of being his own cook. In any case, the officer is expected to see to it that at least eight or ten men in each company are skilled in the making of a field kitchen and in cooking. The sergeant cook and three assistants choose the most suitable site, dig a trench, fit in their apparatus; and the cooking proceeds by the use of a series of kettles, the size depending upon the number of men composing the mess. Not more than thirty-five minutes elapse between the opening of the ground and the boiling of the water. Dry twigs must always be carried from place to place, and a facility acquired in using various kinds of fuel. For emergency

Photo by] [*Bedford Lemere, Strand.*

SALOON PANTRY ON A "WOERMANN" LINE STEAMSHIP.

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A TROPHY IN ROYAL SUGAR-PIPING.

meals the men combine in parties of eight, and so arrange their eight mess-tins that they form a pigeon-hole, or oven, to make a "kitchen." All sorts of fuel can be burnt in the cavity, and each man's ration very soon cooked.

Since extremes meet, it is no far cry from such a kitchen to the chafing-dish, which has turned the dining-room table into a miniature kitchen. As a passing craze it has given infinite delight to some of the gilded ladies of Millionaire Square, New York, and, though a long way behind "bridge," is steadily making its way to favour in this country.

The Jack Tar Commissariat.

Lovers of "Jack" cannot fail to be delighted to hear of the immense improvements effected within the last few years in the commissariat and cuisine of the Royal Navy, as a result of the decision of a Special Committee. The curious system of "savings," in vogue for upwards of one hundred years, has been preserved, so that the men may still take up the whole or only a portion of their ration in kind, or they may receive in lieu thereof a monetary payment wherewith they may purchase at the canteen what is more to their fancy. But as the former heavy and unappetising three meals a day have given place to five, in which the men's tastes are more intelligently considered, statistics would probably show an immense falling off in the "savings" effected by the men. Of old they had a big breakfast, most of which was untouched, about 6 in the morning, dinner about 12, and supper at 4.30. Now they have cocoa on rising, a good breakfast at 8, dinner at 12, tea at 4.30, and supper at 7.30. Instead of being served with a pound of meat at dinner, a quarter of it is exchanged for some suitable supper relish. Further concessions have been made in the allowance of sugar, vegetables, dried fruit, condensed milk, jam, etc. And within the last few weeks "Jack" has at last been promoted to the use of a knife and fork in lieu of his own formerly essential clasp-knife.

The Case of the Mercantile Marine.

Such splendid reforms only intensify the gloom which so long hung over the conditions of service obtaining in the Mercantile Marine, which, after all, is our second line of naval defence. Owing to the increase in the number of foreigners, including Lascars, employed on these ships, a Commission was appointed some time back to consider this national problem. Undoubtedly among the causes which have contributed to this state of things is the wretched

A BONBON-BASKET MADE OF PULLED SUGAR.

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food supplied and the yet more wretched cooking. Thousands of promising young Britishers have abandoned their natural vocation, a seafaring life, because of the "devil-sent cook." It is satisfactory to know that the Board of Trade is now nearer to an authority to insist upon a more generous supply of food, and upon the appointment only of those men as cooks who possess accredited certificates proving their ability to undertake the work. Meanwhile private initiative and the Technical Education Boards of certain County Councils have so far appreciated the crying need that Nautical Schools of Cookery have been established at the Sailors' Home, London Docks, in Liverpool, North Shields, on the Tyne and the Humber. Excellent work they are doing, certainly; but, after all, they only represent the thin edge of the wedge towards a national system of reform. In London the humble curriculum consists of twelve lessons, for which two shillings are asked, and adhesion to the rule that while cooking you must neither smoke nor chew tobacco! Once the certificate is made compulsory it will follow that boys in elementary schools will be encouraged to take up nautical cooking. As it is, the boys of a certain school by the docks are taught cookery; and at the National Training School of Cookery, Buckingham Palace Road, there is a class for boys drawn [illegible] elementary schools of the neighbourhood. Of these boys some three or four have shown such decided talent that they have been apprenticed to certain distinguished West End *chefs*.

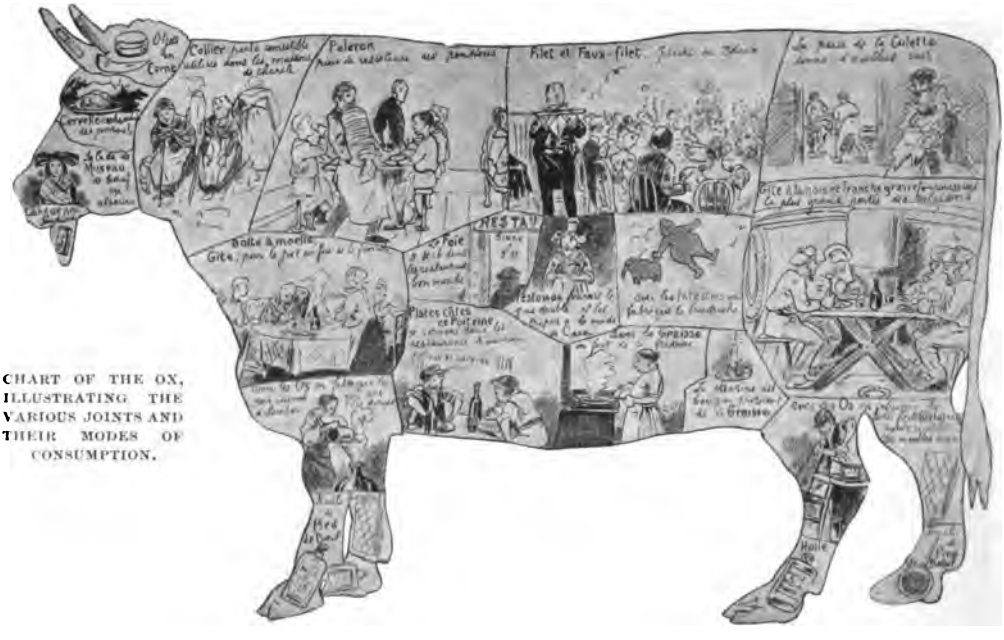

CHART OF THE OX, ILLUSTRATING THE VARIOUS JOINTS AND THEIR MODES OF CONSUMPTION.

Floating Palaces.

But those who would see the highest achievements of culinary skill within the narrow confines of a ship's galley must take passage in a floating palace plying between Liverpool and New York, or London and India. Each day you can command any luxury known to the civilised world, and adjust your diet to accord with the latitude through which the ship is passing. Speedily you learn the art of living under conditions in which four things only happen every day—breakfast, luncheon, tea, dinner, with such important incidents, by the way, as a recourse to the stillroom. A typical galley is that of the s.s. *India*. Coal is used for roasting, charcoal for the grill, steam for general cooking; and all the apparatus is constructed with a view to rough weather. The oven doors have hinges at the bottom instead of at the side, so that when the door is open the handle rests on the floor and a useful shelf is formed. The tops of the stoves, too, have notched bars to hold the saucepans firmly when the ship rolls. Peep into the galley at any moment and the scene is always one of keenest animation. Even

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odd portions of time are utilised in boning turkeys, or boiling hams, or roasting joints for the side-table; or in making bread or cakes or pies. Nor are picturesque touches lacking. A lithe and leisurely Lascar peels potatoes, while a fellow Lascar, with a mood of abstract philosophy upon him, is mysteriously engaged in mixing powders and seeds for curry which he turns into paste with the milk of the cocoanuts at his feet. Nor can the handsome, sleek cats be omitted from the *rôle* of the kitchen staff, for theirs is the function to watch over the extraordinary variety of provisions in the ship's hold. "So near and yet so far!" they murmur with a sigh as they choose for throne the hermetically sealed tins of fresh milk!

Distributing Kitchens.

One cannot more suitably return to the "Conquest of the Kitchen" on *terra firma* than by way of the new travelling kitchens devised by the London Distributing Kitchens, Limited, with headquarters at Westminster Palace Gardens, Victoria Street. No longer need the modern woman deplore the delinquencies of cooks, or attempt to maintain a kitchen in Flatland. At the rate of three shillings per head per day you can have breakfast, luncheon, tea, and dinner brought piping hot to your table in patent carrier trays, with a number of compartments for the various dishes, the crockery, the linen, and plate. In the same trays ices can be conveyed "freezing hard," with only a thin metal barrier 'twixt them and the hot soup. A motor-car, charcoal heated, is the medium between the kitchens, with their large staff of *chefs* and skilled cooks, and your own home. Needless to say, we owe the birth of this novel solution of the domestic servant problem to the daughters of the Stars and Stripes.

THE ARMY CHALLENGE SHIELD FOR COOKERY.
At present held by the Irish Guards.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

Consommé Riche en Tasses.

Ortolans Rôtis, Sur Canapés.
Escalopes de Homard à la Richelieu.
Côtelettes de Saumon à la Montpellier.

Suprême de Volaille à la Reine.
Chaufroix de Cailles à la Russe.
Noisettes d'Agneau à la St. Germain.
Poulets, Langue et Jambon à la Valenciennes.

Sandwiches Assortis.

Macédoine de Fruits au Champagne.
Gelées aux Pêches de Montreuil.
Flumeries aux Fraises à la Compiègne.

Pièces Montées sur Socles.
Petites Pâtisseries Fondantes.

Glaces à la Parisienne.
Corbeilles Bonbonnières.
Dessert.

Limonade et Orangeade.

Souper de Bal du 8 Juillet, 1903

MENU OF THE BALL-SUPPER AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT OF THE FRENCH PRESIDENT.

Hospital and Nurses.

If medicine is a substance that has the property of preventing, curing, or alleviating disease, then properly prepared food must take the first place in our pharmacopœia, and the cook have a position allied to that of the physician. Our vegetarian friends, at any rate, subscribe to this doctrine, and at their hospital at Loughton make the kitchen quite eclipse the dispensary. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to overestimate the importance of the kitchen in every well-managed hospital; and of such institutions the London

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Hospital may be taken as representative, though its kitchen, till the new one is built, is small, and, as things go, old-fashioned. In accordance with an excellent system of culinary book-keeping, the daily diet-sheet, from which the cook works each morning, focuses the whole dietary of the hospital, with its 29 wards of 650 beds, and its 90 attendants and servants. The nurses have, in the grounds, their own separate home and two kitchens, one in which the probationers are taught invalid cooking in six-week courses.

Each morning the doctors, in going round the wards, write on the board hanging by the bedside of each patient the number of his diet, or, to give the names by which these diets are known in various hospitals—convalescent, milk, fish, spoon, and so on, together with extras. This is copied by the ward sister on to her sheet, which is sent down in the course of the afternoon to the steward, who thereupon composes the hospital diet-sheet. On totting up the various items, he knows what to order and what quantities of food to have prepared. The totals vary daily; but, taking a few items at random, one would find 280 lb. of potatoes being cooked, 28 chickens, 223 pints of soup, 93 pints of beef-tea, 337 eggs, 406 diets of greens. The average of bread would be 600 lb., and of milk 800 quarts.

Dinner, however, is the only meal completely prepared in the central kitchen, where there remains one curiosity of cooking—almost the last in London—a gas-well, in which the joints of meat, having been lowered into it on iron bars, are roasted. When closed, the lid is about level with the floor; when open, a pit is revealed with a rim of gas-jets round the bottom. The climax of the kitchen work is reached at twelve o'clock, when the dinner-wagons are drawn forth and piled up with dishes. In a few minutes they have disappeared up the lifts, to be distributed throughout that temple of mercy. The other meals of the day are prepared by the nurses themselves in the ward kitchens.

"The Man in the Street."

But, after all, "the man in the street" remains the most important factor in our population, and he must every day dine somewhere. In true Bohemian fashion he may be seen in the kitchen-dining-halls of the London County Council doss-house, or the Rowton Hotels, presiding over his own steak and odoriferous onions, or anxiously watching, with fork in hand, the spluttering of sausage or bloater, while he discusses meanwhile with his fellow-lodger, engaged in similar occupation, the fluctuations of trade or the fortunes of the war. In the adjoining tuck-shop you can buy anything—from a farthing's-worth of milk or sugar to

SPECIAL BREAD CONTEST AT THE UNIVERSAL COOKERY EXHIBITION.

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A PRACTICE LESSON AT THE NATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL OF COOKERY.

a ha'porth of bread—and if it is cut with a hammy knife, so much the better while the funds are low. The English Sunday has somehow become as closely linked with the thought of hot joint as with church bells, and it is no uncommon thing to find the men on this, of all days, clubbing together in small parties to purchase the delectable joint.

This individualist method of cooking, however, is sadly old-fashioned and clumsy beside the wonderful system which is at work in the dining-palace of the Alexandra Trust, in the City Road. Think of a kitchen in which dinners can be prepared daily for 12,000 people, sitting down in relays of 1,500, and being served *à la carte* from a halfpenny a dish, to *table d'hôte* at fivepence for a three-course dinner—first course, soup; second course, either of the following—roast or boiled pork, mutton, or beef, steak pudding, Irish stew, stewed steak, liver and bacon, fish, and always two vegetables; third course, pastry, or mug of tea, coffee, or cocoa.

The kitchen is at the top of the building, and similar in general excellence of design to that of Fulham Workhouse, though, of course, the equipments are far more lavish and varied. Overhead and on each wall is a vari-coloured network of pipes—steam being conveyed by the red, hot water by the yellow, cold water by the blue. Fancy being able to steam the potatoes at the rate of a ton and a half per hour; to make five hundred gallons of soup in the six steam-jacketed boilers; to cook in the steam chests hundreds of beef-steak puddings, in small enamelled basins, and hundreds of roly-poly puddings, placed, not in cloths, but in deeply fluted tin moulds, which leave "ha'penny slice" impressions. You can rely also upon the tea, coffee, and cocoa being properly made, for the water cannot be drawn off into the appropriate receptacles till it has attained the requisite 112 degrees of heat. The boilers for heating the water and making the steam are fitted in the basement, where there is ample lavatory accommodation, even to facilities for having your boots blacked at a halfpenny per pair. Thus, after a century, we have realised the ideal of Count Rumford, and, with tardy recognition of their value, have adapted to our English purpose the public kitchens of Berlin!

But "the man in the street" has of late years been the descriptive title applied to a very large and varied section of average humanity, and to attempt to enumerate the innumerable feeding-places of so wide a class would require the space of an encyclopædia in which the chronicler could range from the humblest eating-houses to the culinary palaces of our great hotels and fashionable restaurants.

To see cooking undertaken as one of the fine arts and experimental sciences, and to know the last word that civilisation has spoken, one must go to such a kitchen as that of the Carlton Hotel, presided over by M. Escoffier, prince of *chefs* and *chef* of princes. Each of the score or so *sous-chefs* is an adept and artist in his own

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speciality, and has to earn the high salary paid to originality and resource. The kitchen has been fitted up, largely by the direction of the *chef*, with every device known to high-class cooking. Though situated in the basement, the ventilation is carried out with the perfection of skilful apparatus. Round the kitchen radiate a number of rooms, each devoted to some special culinary operation, from the making of tea and coffee to the cleaning of fish and its preparation for cooking, to say nothing of the ice-room, where, amid walls glistening with frost and ice, the meat and poultry hang. Beside the bakery there is a room in which the decorative dishes, some requiring hours and even days of preparation, are created. Along one corridor are ten or twelve refuse receptacles which are cleared out each morning. Preparations go on busily all day, but from about seven the kitchen presents a scene of the intensest animation. Two staircases communicate with the luxurious dining-rooms above, and down one there passes a constant succession of waiters, who each delivers his order to the *chef* it most concerns, and waits in most cases till it is complied with, and then passes rapidly away again for further orders.

Public Banquets.

Difficult as is the supervision of such a kitchen, it still remains that the *chef* with ideas and fertility of resource has best opportunity of distinguishing himself in the preparation for some public banquet, and it is then that the resources of a kitchen are strained to the uttermost. The kitchens of the Mansion House and the Guildhall, old-fashioned though they are, again and again have managed to accommodate themselves to this strain, and have improved and matured in service like the fine old wines laid down in the adjoining cellars. Architecturally they are both equal to their historic reputations, for the roof of each is vaulted—that of the Mansion House being heavy Grecian, that of the Guildhall rich Gothic. To say nothing of the annual Lord Mayor's banquet, scarcely an important event takes place in our national or imperial history that is not commemorated by a City feast and a cuisine event. Great statesmen, generals, admirals, scientists, foreign potentates have all in turn partaken of our City hospitality. At one mayoralty dinner seven sons of George I. were present; at another, given in the short peace which preceded Waterloo, to the Prince Regent and Allied Sovereigns, no less than £25,000 was spent, and the gold and silver plate in use was worth £200,000.

The crypt kitchen of the Guildhall is only used for cooking when a great banquet is on hand, but sometimes, as at the huge *soirée* given to the Church Congress when it met in London, it serves yet other purposes, and the refreshments are served to the guests in among the gas-stoves and kitchen ranges. On the other hand, the Mansion House kitchen is in constant use, for not only has the mayoral household to be fed, but each successive Lord Mayor has, in his official capacity, to entertain practically every day, and to maintain the City reputation for good feeding. Numerous joints and farmyards of poultry frisk merrily round and round the turnspit before either of the two enormous coal fires, each built large enough to roast an entire ox. Gas is only sparingly used for a few culinary operations.

We have taken but the merest bird's-eye view of the great developments of the culinary art in the life of modern England. Time alone will show what further developments are in store for us. But far more important than any increase in the mere refinements of luxury is the growth of public appreciation of the fact that questions of food and its fit providing involve a serious problem in our domestic and even our national economy. Much has been done of late, and now, in the aggregate, very large sums are spent annually by County Councils and School Boards in teaching children and others the science and art of cookery. Such an institution as the National Training School of Cookery, with its systematised instruction and its practical demonstrations, under the able inspectorship of experts such as Mr. C. Herman Senn, is gradually accomplishing an important work in training not merely the mature, but the young idea of both sexes to understand the real value to health and physique of thoroughly intelligent cookery. And such fixtures as the Universal Cookery and Food Association's Exhibitions are giving valuable publicity and seriousness to the larger questions at stake in culinary interests. The kitchen has conquered us – but it rests with ourselves to conquer the kitchen!

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TOMMY & CO.

By JEROME K. JEROME.*

No. II.—THE BEGINNINGS OF WILLIAM CLODD.

RS. POSTWHISTLE sat on a Windsor chair in the centre of Rolls Court. Mrs. Postwhistle, who, in the days of her Hebehood, had been likened by admiring frequenters of the old "Mitre" in Chancery Lane to the ladies, somewhat emaciated, that an English artist, since become famous, was then commencing to popularise, had developed with the passing years, yet still retained a face of placid youthfulness. The two facts, taken in conjunction, had resulted in an asset to her income not to be despised. The wanderer through Rolls Court this summer's afternoon, presuming him to be familiar with current journalism, would have retired haunted by the sense that the restful-looking lady on the Windsor chair was someone that he ought to know. Glancing through almost any illustrated paper of the period, the problem would have been solved for him. A photograph of Mrs. Postwhistle, taken quite recently, he would have encountered with this legend: "*Before* use of Professor Hardtop's certain cure for corpulency." Beside it a photograph of Mrs. Postwhistle, then Arabella Higgins, taken twenty years ago, the legend slightly varied: "*After* use," etc. The face was the same, the figure—there was no denying it—had undergone decided alteration.

Mrs. Postwhistle had reached with her chair the centre of Rolls Court in course of following the sun. The little shop, over the lintel of which ran: "Timothy Postwhistle, Grocer and Provision Merchant," she had left behind her in the shadow. Old inhabitants of St. Dunstan-in-the-West retained recollection of a gentlemanly figure, always in a very gorgeous waistcoat, with Dundreary whiskers, to be seen occasionally there behind the counter. All customers it would refer, with the air of a Lord High Chamberlain introducing *débutantes*, to Mrs. Postwhistle, evidently regarding itself purely as ornamental. For the last ten years, however, no one had noticed it there, and Mrs. Postwhistle had a facility amounting almost to genius for ignoring or misunderstanding questions it was not to her taste to answer. Most things were suspected, nothing known. St. Dunstan-in-the-West had turned to other problems.

"If I wasn't wanting to see 'im," remarked to herself Mrs. Postwhistle, who was knitting with one eye upon the shop, "'e'd 'a' been 'ere 'fore I'd 'ad time to clear the dinner things away; certain to 'ave been. It's a strange world."

Mrs. Postwhistle was desirous for the arrival of a gentleman not usually awaited with impatience by the ladies of Rolls Court—to wit, one William Clodd, rent collector, whose day for St. Dunstan-in-the-West was Tuesday.

"At last," said Mrs. Postwhistle, though without hope that Mr. Clodd, who had just appeared at the other end of the Court, could possibly hear her. "Was beginning to be afraid as you'd tumbled over yerself in your 'urry and 'urt yerself."

Mr. Clodd, perceiving Mrs. Postwhistle, decided to abandon method and take No. 7 first.

Mr. Clodd was a short, thick-set, bullet-headed young man, with ways that were bustling, and eyes that, though kind, suggested trickiness.

"Ah!" said Mr. Clodd admiringly, as he pocketed the six half-crowns that the lady handed up to him. "If only they were all like you, Mrs. Postwhistle!"

"Wouldn't be no need of chaps like you to worry 'em," pointed out Mrs. Postwhistle.

"It's an irony of fate, my being a rent-collector, when you come to think of it," remarked Mr. Clodd, writing out the receipt. "If I had my way, I'd put an end to landlordism, root and branch. Curse of the country."

"Just the very thing I wanted to talk to you about," returned the lady—"that lodger o' mine."

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"Ah! don't pay, don't he? You just hand him over to me. I'll soon have it out of him."

"It's not that," explained Mrs. Postwhistle. "If a Saturday morning 'appened to come round as 'e didn't pay up without me asking, I should know I'd made a mistake—that it must be Friday. If I don't 'appen to be in at 'alf past ten, 'e puts it in an envelope and leaves it on the table."

"Wonder if his mother has got any more like him?" mused Mr. Clodd. "Could do with a few about this neighbourhood. What is it you want to say about him, then? Merely to brag about him?"

"I wanted to ask you," continued Mrs. Postwhistle, "'ow I could get rid of 'im. It was rather a curious agreement."

"Why do you want to get rid of him? Too noisy?"

"Noisy! Why, the cat makes more noise about the 'ouse than 'e does. 'E'd make 'is fortune as a burglar."

"Come home late?"

"Never known 'im out after the shutters are up."

"Gives you too much trouble, then?"

"I can't say that of 'im. Never know whether 'e's in the 'ouse or isn't, without going upstairs and knocking at the door."

"Here, you tell it your own way," suggested the bewildered Clodd. "If it was anyone else but you, I should say you didn't know your own business."

"'E gets on my nerves," said Mrs. Postwhistle. "You ain't in a 'urry for five minutes?"

Mr. Clodd was always in a hurry. "But I can forget it talking to you," added the gallant Mr. Clodd.

Mrs. Postwhistle led the way into the little parlour.

"Just the name of it," consented Mr. Clodd. "Cheerfulness combined with temperance: that's the ideal."

"I'll tell you what 'appened only last night," commenced Mrs. Postwhistle, seating herself the opposite side of the loo-table. "A letter came for 'im by the seven o'clock post. I'd seen 'im go out two hours before, and though I'd been sitting in the shop the whole blessed time, I never saw or 'eard 'im pass through. 'E's like that. It's like 'aving a ghost for a lodger. I opened 'is door without knocking and went in. If you'll believe me, 'e was clinging with 'is arms and legs to the top of the bedstead—it's one of those old-fashioned, four-post things—'is 'ead touching the ceiling. 'E 'adn't got too much clothes on, and was cracking nuts with 'is teeth and eating 'em. 'E threw a 'andful of shells at me, and making the most awful faces at me, set off gibbering softly to himself."

"All play, I suppose? No real vice?" commented the interested Mr. Clodd.

"It will go on for a week, that will," continued Mrs. Postwhistle—"'e fancying 'imself a monkey. Last week 'e was a tortoise, and was crawling about on 'is stomach with a tea-tray tied on to 'is back. 'E's as sensible as most men, if that's saying much, the moment 'e's outside the front door; but in the 'ouse—well, I suppose the fact is that 'e's a lunatic."

"Don't seem no hiding anything from you, Mrs. Postwhistle," remarked Mr. Clodd in tones of admiration. "Does he ever get violent?"

"Don't know what 'e would be like if 'e 'appened to fancy 'imself something really dangerous," answered Mrs. Postwhistle. "I am a bit nervous of this new monkey game, I don't mind confessing to you—the things that they do according to the picture-books. Up to now, except for imagining 'imself a mole, and taking all 'is meals underneath the carpet, it's been mostly birds and cats and 'armless sort o' things I 'aven't seemed to mind so much."

"How did you get hold of him?" demanded Mr. Clodd. "Have much trouble in finding him, or did somebody come and tell you about him?"

"Old Gladman, of Chancery Lane, the law stationer, brought 'im 'ere one evening about two months ago—said 'e was a sort of distant relative of 'is, a bit soft in the 'ead, but perfectly 'armless—wanted to put 'im with someone who wouldn't impose on 'im. Well, what between 'aving been empty for over five weeks, the poor old gaby 'imself looking as gentle as a lamb, and the figure being reasonable, I rather jumped at the idea; and old Gladman, explaining as 'ow 'e wanted the thing settled and done with, got me to sign a letter."

"Kept a copy of it?" asked the business-like Clodd.

"No. But I can remember what it was. Gladman 'ad it all ready. So long as the money was paid punctual and 'e didn't make no disturbance and didn't fall sick, I was to go on boarding and lodging 'im for seventeen and sixpence a week. It didn't strike me as anything to be objected to at the time; but 'e payin' regular, as I've explained to you, and be'aving, so far as disturbance is con-

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cerned, more like a Christian martyr than a man, well, it looks to me as if I'd got to live and die with 'im."

"Give him rope, and possibly he'll have a week at being a howling hyæna, or a laughing jackass, or something of that sort that will lead to a disturbance," thought Mr. Clodd, "in which case, of course, you would have your remedy."

"Yes," thought Mrs. Postwhistle, "and possibly also 'e may take it into what 'e calls 'is 'ead to be a tiger or a bull, and then perhaps before 'e's through with it I'll be beyond the reach of remedies."

"''E threw a 'andful of shells at me.'"

"Leave it to me," said Mr. Clodd, rising and searching for his hat. "I know old Gladman; I'll have a talk with him."

"You might get a look at that letter if you can," suggested Mrs. Postwhistle, "and tell me what you think about it. I don't want to spend the rest of my days in a lunatic asylum of my own if I can 'elp it."

"You leave it to me," was Mr. Clodd's parting assurance.

The July moon had thrown a silver veil over the grimness of Rolls Court when, five hours later, Mr. Clodd's nailed boots echoed again upon its uneven pavement; but Mr. Clodd had no eye for moon or stars or such-like; always he had things more important to think of.

"Seen the old 'umbug?" asked Mrs. Postwhistle, who was partial to the air, leading the way into the parlour.

"First and foremost," commenced Mr. Clodd, as he laid aside his hat, "it is quite understood that you really do want to get rid of him? What's that?" demanded Mr. Clodd, a heavy thud upon the floor above having caused him to start out of his chair.

"'E came in an hour after you'd gone," explained Mrs. Postwhistle, "bringing with 'im a curtain-pole as 'e'd picked up for a shilling in Clare Market. 'E's rested one end upon the mantelpiece and tied the other

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to the back of the easy-chair—'is idea is to twine 'imself round it and go to sleep upon it. Yes, you've got it quite right without a single blunder. I do want to get rid of 'im."

"Then," said Mr. Clodd, reseating himself, "it can be done."

"Thank God for that!" was Mrs. Postwhistle's pious ejaculation.

"It's just as I thought," continued Mr. Clodd. "The old innocent—he's Gladman's brother-in-law, by the way—has got a small annuity. I couldn't get the actual figure, but I guess it's about sufficient to pay for his keep and leave old Gladman, who is running him, a very decent profit. They don't want to send him to an asylum. They can't say he's a pauper, and to put him into a private establishment would swallow up, most likely, the whole of his income. On the other hand, they don't want the bother of looking after him themselves. I talked pretty straight to the old man—let him see I understood the business; and—well, to cut a long story short, I'm willing to take on the job, provided you really want to have done with it, and Gladman is willing in that case to let you off your contract."

Mrs. Postwhistle went to the cupboard to get Mr. Clodd a drink. Another thud upon the floor above—one suggestive of exceptional velocity—arrived at the precise moment when Mrs. Postwhistle, the tumbler level with her eye, was in the act of measuring.

"I call this making a disturbance," said Mrs. Postwhistle, regarding the broken fragments.

"It's only for another night," comforted her Mr. Clodd. "I'll take him away some time to-morrow. Meanwhile, if I were you, I should spread a mattress underneath that perch of his before I went to bed. I should like him handed over to me in reasonable repair."

"It will deaden the sound a bit, any'ow," agreed Mrs. Postwhistle.

"Success to temperance!" drank Mr. Clodd and rose to go.

"I take it you've fixed things up all right for yourself," said Mrs. Postwhistle; "and nobody can blame you if you 'ave. 'Eaven bless you, is what I say."

"We shall get on together," prophesied Mr. Clodd. "I'm fond of animals."

Early the next morning a four-wheeled cab drew up at the entrance to Rolls Court, and in it and upon it went away Clodd and Clodd's Lunatic (as afterwards he came to be known) together with all the belongings of Clodd's Lunatic, the curtain-pole included; and there appeared again behind the fanlight of the little grocer's shop the intimation: "Lodgings for a Single Man," which caught the eye, a few days later, of a weird-looking, lanky, raw-boned laddie, whose language Mrs. Postwhistle found a difficulty for a time in comprehending; and that is why one sometimes meets to-day worshippers of Kail Yard literature wandering disconsolately about St. Dunstan-in-the-West, seeking Rolls Court, discomforted because it is no more. But that is the history of the "Wee Laddie," and this of the beginnings of William Clodd.

No one can say of Clodd that he did not deserve whatever profit his unlicensed lunatic asylum may have brought him. A kindly man was William Clodd, when indulgence in sentiment did not interfere with business.

"There's no harm in him," asserted Mr. Clodd, talking the matter over with one Peter Hope, journalist, of 16, Gough Square. "He's just a bit dotty, same as you or I might get with nothing to do and all day long to do it in. Kid's play, that's all it is. The best plan, I find, is to treat it as a game and take a hand in it. Last week he wanted

"'Last week 'e was a tortoise.'"

to be a lion. I could see that was going to be troublesome, he roaring for raw meat, and thinking to prowl about the house at night. Well, I didn't nag him—that's no good. I just got a gun and shot him. He's a duck now, and I'm trying to keep him one: sits for an hour beside his bath on three china

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eggs I've bought him. Wish some of the sane ones were as little trouble."

The summer came again. Clodd and his Lunatic, a mild-looking little old gentleman of somewhat clerical cut, one often met with arm-in-arm, bustling about the streets and courts that were the scene of Clodd's rent-

"'Is idea is to twine 'imself round it and go to sleep upon it.'"

collecting labours. Their evident attachment to one another was curiously displayed: Clodd, the young and red-haired, treating his white-haired, withered companion with fatherly indulgence; the other glancing up from time to time into Clodd's face with a winning expression of infantile affection.

"We are getting much better," explained Clodd, the pair meeting Peter Hope one day at the corner of Newcastle Street. "The more we are out in the open air and the more we have to do and think about, the better for us—eh?"

The mild-looking little old gentleman hanging on Clodd's arm smiled and nodded.

"Between ourselves," added Mr. Clodd, sinking his voice a little, "we are not half as foolish as folks think we are."

Peter Hope went his way down the Strand.

"Clodd's a good sort—a good sort," said Peter Hope, who, having in his time lived much alone, had fallen into the habit of speaking his thoughts aloud; "but he's not the man to waste his time. I wonder."

With the winter Clodd's Lunatic fell ill.

Clodd bustled round to Chancery Lane.

"To tell you the truth," confessed Mr. Gladman, "we never thought he would live so long as he has."

"There's the annuity you've got to think of," said Clodd, whom his admirers of to-day (and they are many, for he must be a millionaire by this time) are fond of alluding to as "that frank, outspoken Englishman."

"Wouldn't it be worth your while to try what taking him away from the fogs might do for him?"

Old Gladman seemed inclined to consider the question, but Mrs. Gladman, a brisk, cheerful little woman, had made up her mind.

"We've had what there is to have," said Mrs. Gladman. "He's seventy-three. What's the sense of risking good money? Be content."

No one could say—no one ever did say—that Clodd, under the circumstances, did not do his best. Perhaps, after all, nothing could have helped. The little old gentleman, at Clodd's suggestion, played at being a dormouse and lay very still. If he grew restless, thereby bringing on his cough, Clodd, as a terrible black cat, was watching to pounce upon him. Only by keeping very quiet and artfully pretending to be asleep could he hope to escape the ruthless Clodd.

Doctor William Smith (*né* Wilhelm Schmidt) shrugged his fat shoulders. "We can do noding. Dese fogs of ours: it is de one ting dat enables the foreigner to crow over us. Keep him quiet. De dormouse—it is a goot idea."

That evening William Clodd mounted to the second floor of 16, Gough Square, where dwelt his friend, Peter Hope, and knocked briskly at the door.

"Come in!" said a decided voice, which was not Peter Hope's.

Mr. William Clodd's ambition was, and always had been, to be the owner or part-owner of a paper. To-day he owns eighteen, and is in negotiation, it is said, for seven more. But twenty years ago "Clodd and Co., Limited" was but in embryo. And Peter Hope, journalist, had likewise and for many a long year cherished the ambition to be, before he died, the owner or part-owner of a paper. Peter Hope to-day owns nothing, except perhaps the knowledge, if such things be permitted, that whenever and wherever

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his name is mentioned, kind thoughts arise unbidden—that someone of the party will surely say: "Dear old Peter! What a good fellow he was!" Which also may be in its way a valuable possession: who knows? But twenty years ago Peter's horizon was limited by Fleet Street.

Peter Hope was forty-seven, so he said, a dreamer and a scholar. William Clodd was three-and-twenty, a born bustler, very wide awake. Meeting one day by accident upon an omnibus, when Clodd lent Peter, who had come out without his purse, threepence to pay his fare with; drifting into acquaintanceship, each had come to acquire a liking and respect for the other. The dreamer thought with wonder of Clodd's shrewd practicability; the cute young man of business was lost in admiration of what seemed to him his old friend's marvellous learning. Both had arrived at the conclusion that a weekly journal with Peter Hope as editor, and William Clodd as manager, would be bound to be successful.

"If only we could scrape together a thousand pounds!" had sighed Peter.

"The moment we lay our hands upon the coin, we'll start that paper. Remember, it's a bargain," had answered William Clodd.

Mr. William Clodd turned the handle and walked in. With the door still in his hand he paused to look round the room. It was the first time he had seen it. His meetings hitherto with Peter Hope had been chance *rencontres* in street or restaurant. Always had he been curious to view the sanctuary of so much erudition.

A large, oak-panelled room, its three high windows, each with a low, cushioned seat beneath it, giving on to Gough Square. Thirty-five years before, Peter Hope, then a young dandy with side whiskers close-cropped and terminating just below the ear; with wavy, brown hair, giving to his fresh-complexioned face an appearance almost girlish; in cut-away blue coat, flowered waistcoat, black silk cravat secured by two gold pins chained together, and tightly strapped grey trouserings, had, aided and abetted by a fragile little lady in crinoline and much-flounced skirt, and bodice somewhat low, with corkscrew curls each movement of her head set ringing, planned and furnished it in accordance with the sober canons then in vogue, spending thereupon more than they should, as is to be expected from the young to whom the future promises all things. The fine Brussels carpet! A little too bright, had thought the shaking curls. "The colours will tone down, miss—ma'am." The shopman knew. Only by the help of the round island underneath the massive Empire table, by excursions into untrodden corners, could Peter recollect the rainbow floor his feet had pressed when he was twenty-one. The noble bookcase, surmounted by Minerva's bust. Really it was too expensive. But the nodding curls had been so obstinate. Peter's silly books and papers must be put away in order; the curls did not intend to permit any excuse for untidiness. So, too, the handsome, brass-bound desk; it must be worthy of the beautiful thoughts Peter would pen upon it. The great sideboard, supported by two such angry-looking mahogany lions; it must be strong, to support the weight of silver clever Peter would one day purchase to place upon it. The few oil paintings in their heavy frames. A solidly furnished, sober apartment; about it that subtle atmosphere of dignity one finds but in old rooms long undisturbed, where one seems to read upon the walls: "I, Joy and Sorrow, twain in one, have dwelt here." One item only there was that seemed out of place among its grave surroundings—a guitar, hanging from the wall, ornamented with a ridiculous blue bow, somewhat faded.

"Mr. William Clodd?" demanded the decided voice.

Clodd started and closed the door.

"Guessed it in once," admitted Mr. Clodd.

"I thought so," said the decided voice. "We got your note this afternoon. Mr. Hope will be back at eight. Will you kindly hang up your hat and coat in the hall? You will find a box of cigars on the mantelpiece. Excuse my being busy. I must finish this, then I'll talk to you."

The owner of the decided voice went on writing. Clodd, having done as he was bid, sat himself in the easy-chair before the fire and smoked. Of the person behind the desk Mr. Clodd could see but the head and shoulders. It had black, curly hair, cut short. Its only garment visible below the white collar and red tie might have been a boy's jacket designed more like a girl's, or a girl's designed more like a boy's; partaking of the genius of English statesmanship, it appeared to be a compromise. Mr. Clodd remarked the long, drooping lashes over the bright, black eyes.

"It's a girl," said Mr. Clodd to himself—"rather a pretty girl."

Mr. Clodd, continuing downward, arrived at the nose.

"No," said Mr. Clodd to himself, "it's a

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boy—a cheeky young beggar, I should say."

The person at the desk, giving a grunt of satisfaction, gathered together sheets of manuscript and arranged them; then, resting its elbows on the desk and taking its head between its hands, regarded Mr. Clodd.

"Don't you hurry yourself," said Mr. Clodd; "but when you really have finished, tell me what you think of me."

"I beg your pardon," apologised the person at the desk. "I have got into a habit of staring at people. I know it's rude. I'm trying to break myself of it."

"Tell me your name," suggested Mr. Clodd, "and I'll forgive you."

"Tommy," was the answer — "I mean Jane."

"Make up your mind," advised Mr. Clodd; "don't let me influence you. I only want the truth."

"You see," explained the person at the desk, "everybody calls me Tommy, because that used to be my name. But now it's Jane."

"'Last week he wanted to be a lion.'"

"I see," said Mr. Clodd. "And which am I to call you?"

The person at the desk pondered. "Well, if this scheme you and Mr. Hope have been talking about really comes to anything, we shall be a good deal thrown together, you see, and then I expect you'll call me Tommy—most people do."

"You've heard about the scheme? Mr. Hope has told you?"

"Why, of course," replied Tommy. "I'm Mr. Hope's devil."

For the moment Clodd doubted whether his old friend had not started a rival establishment to his own.

"I help him in his work," Tommy relieved his mind by explaining. "In journalistic circles we call it devilling."

"I understand," said Mr. Clodd. "And what do you think, Tommy, of the scheme? I may as well start calling you Tommy, because, between you and me, I think the idea will come to something."

Tommy fixed her black eyes upon him. She seemed to be looking him right through.

"You are staring again, Tommy," Clodd reminded her. "You'll have trouble breaking yourself of that habit, I can see."

"I was trying to make up my mind about you. Everything depends upon the business man."

"Glad to hear you say so," replied the self-satisfied Clodd.

"If you are very clever—— Do you mind coming nearer to the lamp? I can't quite see you over there."

Clodd never could understand why he did it—never could understand why, from first to last, he always did what Tommy wished him to do; his only consolation being that other folks seemed just as helpless. He rose and, crossing the long room, stood at attention before the large desk, nervousness, to which he was somewhat of a stranger, taking possession of him.

"You don't *look* very clever."

Clodd experienced another new sensation—that of falling in his own estimation.

"And yet one can see that you *are* clever."

The mercury of Clodd's conceit shot upward to a point that in the case of anyone less physically robust than he might have been dangerous to health.

Clodd held out his hand. "We'll pull it through, Tommy. The Guv'nor shall find the literature; you and I will make it go. I like you."

And Peter Hope, entering at the moment, caught a spark from the light that shone in

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the eyes of William Clodd and Tommy, whose other name was Jane, as, gripping hands, they stood with the desk between them, laughing they knew not why. And the years fell from old Peter, and, again a boy, he also laughed he knew not why. He had sipped from the wine-cup of youth.

"It's all settled, Guv'nor!" cried Clodd. "Tommy and I have fixed things up. We'll start with the New Year."

"You've got the money?"

"I'm reckoning on it. I don't see very well how I can miss it."

"Sufficient?"

"Just about. You get to work."

"I've saved a little," began Peter. "It ought to have been more, but somehow it isn't."

"Perhaps we shall want it," Clodd replied; "perhaps we shan't. You are supplying the brains."

The three for a few moments remained silent.

"I think, Tommy," said Peter, "I think a bottle of the old Madeira——"

"Not to-night," said Clodd; "next time."

"To drink success," urged Peter.

"One man's success generally means some other poor devil's misfortune," answered Clodd. "Can't be helped, of course, but don't want to think about it to-night. Must be getting back to my dormouse. Good night."

Clodd shook hands and bustled out.

"I thought as much," mused Peter aloud. "What an odd mixture the man is! Kind—no one could have been kinder to the poor old fellow. Yet all the while—— We are an odd mixture, Tommy," said Peter Hope, "an odd mixture, we men and women." Peter was a philosopher.

The white-whiskered old dormouse soon coughed himself to sleep for ever.

"I shall want you and the missis to come to the funeral, Gladman," said Mr. Clodd, as he swung into the stationer's shop; "and bring Pincer with you. I'm writing to him."

"Don't see what good we can do," demurred Gladman.

"Well, you three are his only relatives; it's only decent you should be present," urged Clodd. "Besides, there's the will to be read. You may care to hear it."

The dry old law stationer opened wide his watery eyes.

"His will! Why, what had he got to leave? There was nothing but the annuity."

"You turn up at the funeral," Clodd told him, "and you'll learn all about it. Bonner's clerk will be there and will bring it with him. Everything is going to be done *comme il faut*, as the French say."

"I ought to have known of this," began Mr. Gladman.

"Glad to find you taking so much interest in the old chap," said Clodd. "Pity he's dead and can't thank you."

"I warn you," shouted old Gladman, whose voice was rising to a scream, "he was a helpless imbecile, incapable of acting for himself! If any undue influence——"

"See you on Friday," broke in Clodd, who was busy.

Friday's ceremony was not a sociable affair. Mrs. Gladman spoke occasionally in a shrill whisper to Mr. Gladman, who replied with grunts. Both employed the remainder of their time in scowling at Clodd. Mr. Pincer, a stout, heavy gentleman connected with the House of Commons, maintained a ministerial reserve. The undertaker's foreman expressed himself as thankful when it was over. He criticised it as the humpiest funeral he had ever known; for a time he had serious thoughts of changing his profession.

The solicitor's clerk was waiting for the party on its return from Kensal Green. Clodd again offered hospitality. Mr. Pincer this time allowed himself a glass of weak whisky-and-water, and sipped it with an air of doing so without prejudice. The clerk had one a little stronger. Mrs. Gladman, dispensing with consultation, declined shrilly for self and partner. Clodd, explaining that he always followed legal precedent, mixed himself one also and drank "To our next happy meeting." Then the clerk read.

It was a short and simple will, dated the previous August. It appeared that the old gentleman, unknown to his relatives, had died possessed of shares in a silver mine, once despaired of, now prospering. Taking them at present value, they would produce a sum well over two thousand pounds. The old gentleman had bequeathed five hundred pounds to his brother-in-law, Mr. Gladman, five hundred pounds to his only other living relative, his first cousin, Mr. Pincer. The residue to his friend, William Clodd, as a return for the many kindnesses that gentleman had shown him.

Mr. Gladman rose, more amused than angry.

"And you think you are going to pocket that one thousand to twelve hundred pounds? You really do?" he asked Mr. Clodd, who,

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with legs stretched out before him, sat with his hands deep in his trousers pockets.

"That's the idea," admitted Mr. Clodd.

Mr. Gladman laughed, but without much lightening the atmosphere. "Upon my word, Clodd, you amuse me—you quite amuse me," repeated Mr. Gladman.

"He criticised it as the humpiest funeral he had ever known."

"You always had a sense of humour," commented Mr. Clodd.

"You villain! You double-dyed villain!" screamed Mr. Gladman, suddenly changing his tone. "You think the law is going to allow you to swindle honest men! You think we are going to sit still for you to rob us! That will——" Mr. Gladman pointed a lank forefinger dramatically towards the table.

"You mean to dispute it?" inquired Mr. Clodd.

For a moment Mr. Gladman stood aghast at the other's coolness, but soon found his voice again.

"Dispute it!" he shrieked. "Do you dispute that you influenced him?—dictated it to him word for word, made the poor old helpless idiot sign it, he utterly incapable of even understanding——"

"Don't chatter so much," interrupted Mr. Clodd. "It's not a pretty voice, yours. What I asked you was, do you intend to dispute it?"

"If you will kindly excuse us," struck in Mrs. Gladman, addressing Mr. Clodd with an air of much politeness, "we shall just have time, if we go now, to catch our solicitor before he leaves his office."

Mr. Gladman took up his hat from underneath his chair.

"One moment," suggested Mr. Clodd. "I did influence him to make that will. If you don't like it, there's an end of it."

"Of course," commenced Mr. Gladman, in a mollified tone.

"Sit down," suggested Mr. Clodd. "Let's try another one." Mr. Clodd turned to the clerk. "The previous one, Mr. Wright, if you please; the one dated June the 10th."

An equally short and simple document, it bequeathed three hundred pounds to Mr. William Clodd in acknowledgment of kindnesses received, the residue to the Royal Zoological Society of London, the deceased having been always interested in and fond of animals. The relatives, "who have never shown me the slightest affection or given themselves the slightest trouble concerning me, and who have already received considerable sums out of my income," being by name excluded.

"I may mention," observed Mr. Clodd, no one else appearing inclined to break the silence, "that in suggesting the Royal Zoological Society to my poor old friend as a fitting object for his benevolence, I had in mind a very similar case that occurred five years ago. A bequest to them was disputed on the grounds that the testator was of unsound mind. They had to take their case to the House of Lords before they finally won it."

"Anyhow," remarked Mr. Gladman, licking his lips, which were dry, "you won't get anything, Mr. Clodd—no, not even your three hundred pounds, clever as you think yourself. My brother-in-law's money will go to the lawyers."

Then Mr. Pincer rose and spoke slowly and clearly. "If there must be a lunatic connected with our family, which I don't see why there should be, it seems to me to be you, Nathaniel Gladman."

Mr. Gladman stared back with open mouth. Mr. Pincer went on impressively.

"As for my poor old cousin Joe, he had his eccentricities, but that was all. I for one am prepared to swear that he was of sound

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mind in August last and quite capable of making his own will. It seems to me that that other thing, dated in June, is just waste paper."

Mr. Pincer, having delivered himself, sat down again. Mr. Gladman showed signs of returning language.

"Oh! what's the use of quarrelling?" chirped in cheery Mrs. Gladman. "It's five hundred pounds we never expected. Live and let live is what I always say."

"It's the beastly artfulness of the thing," said Mr. Gladman, still very white about the gills.

"Oh! you have a little something to thaw your face," suggested his wife.

Mr. and Mrs. Gladman, on the strength of the five hundred pounds, went home in a cab. Mr. Pincer stayed behind and made a night of it with Mr. Clodd and Bonner's clerk, at Clodd's expense.

The residue worked out at eleven hundred and sixty-nine pounds and a few shillings. The capital of the new company, "established for the purpose of carrying on the business of newspaper publishers and distributors, printers, advertising agents, and any other trade and enterprise affiliated to the same," was one thousand pounds in one pound shares, fully paid; of which William Clodd, Esquire, was registered proprietor of eight hundred and twenty-six; Peter Hope, M.A., of 16, Gough Square, of one hundred; Miss Jane Hope, adopted daughter of said Peter Hope (her real name nobody, herself included, ever having known), and generally called Tommy, of three, paid for by herself after a battle royal with William Clodd; Mrs. Postwhistle, of Rolls Court, of ten, presented by the promoter; Mr. Pincer, of the House of Commons, also of ten (still owing for); Dr. Smith (*né* Schmidt) of fifty; James Douglas Alexander Calder McTear (otherwise the "Wee Laddie"), residing then in Mrs. Postwhistle's first floor front, of one, paid for by poem published in the first number: "The Song of the Pen."

Choosing a title for the paper cost much thought. Driven to despair, they called it "Good Humour."

BEYOND.

I'D like so much to get Beyond,
But I am always Here;
I climbed up on the highest hill;
Oh, my legs ached, but farther still
I saw Beyond.

It's Over There, just one step past
Where the blue sky comes down.
I think if someone only would
Go first and hold it tight, I could
Get There at last.

Or else to take it by surprise
When things are still and grey:
Slip softly to that sunset ledge,
Then see off from the very Edge
With my own eyes.

FLORENCE WILKINSON.

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THE DOG-BARBERS OF PARIS.

By ÉDOUARD CHARLES.

Illustrated from photographs by Clarke and Hyde.

I ALWAYS regard the *rives* of the Seine, where they twist through Paris from the Pont d'Austerlitz to the Pont du Jour, as the backyard of the city; and gazing east or west from any one of the numerous bridges between those two extremities, the reflective stranger would probably share this view, for much of the household work that the masses of a big English city do in the privacy of their small backyards, from the weekly washing of the dog to the annual beating of the carpet, is performed in Paris in the open light of day—along the cobbled shores of the Seine that slope from the high embankment wall to the water. Such publicity is due largely to the fact that here every man's house is not his castle, and backyards are unknown. The only thing approaching them is the *cour*, common to a tenement in which, maybe, half-a-hundred people live, like rabbits in a warren; and the size of the *cour* is always in inverse ratio to that of the building. Invariably, too, the *concierge* regards it as her own particular domain, trespassers being persecuted as only a Parisian *concierge* can persecute. Where it exists, she is responsible for its cleanliness,

CLIPPING.

COMBING.

and dog-washing and carpet-beating are taboo, but as often as not it does not exist at all.

So the man with a dog to wash must hie himself to the river and there perform the animal's ablutions; but few self-respecting men, willingly as they would do this in the privacy of their home, care to exhibit themselves in so undignified a *rôle* to the world at large. In addition, the French poodle is not like other dogs; when it is washed, it calls for a lot of washing, and it is the fashion to clip the animal's coat well-nigh all over as closely as it can be clipped, without actually shaving it, which isn't a one-man job. Hence the dog-barber, or *tondeur*, as he professionally styles himself—a product created by a whimsical *mode* in canine toilet; and he makes his pitch by the Seine because

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he owns no private backyard wherein to pursue his calling, and because he has been there since *le chien mouton* sprang into fashion.

There are *tondeurs* and *tondeurs*, some firmly established with the reputation of years behind them, and filled with as much doggy knowledge as any to be found in Seven Dials; they are both dog-barbers and dog-dealers, and some even run boarding-houses for members of the canine race, taking charge of them while their owners are out of town; the others divide their time between clipping poodles and cleaning boots in the streets, ready to do whichever comes first to hand. So if you see a shoeblack's box inscribed "Tondeur" in very ill-painted letters, you will not jump to the conclusion that it is French or even Argot for "bootblack," or that the man cuts corns; it is just the advertisement for the other branch of his business.

Along the Seine there are many dog-barbers; indeed, they are only outnumbered by outcasts and artists. Peer over the embankment from any of the *quais* to the foreshore below, and it will be an exception if there are not a dog-barber's tubs and chairs in sight, with the box, inscribed with his name and calling, that holds the necessary tools of the business. If he and his partner—generally his wife—are not working, they will be dozing, or taking *déjeuner at fresco* 'neath the shade of the wall. Under the blazing sun half-a-dozen towels are laid out on the stones to dry, or, if the wind be blowing, hung up to dry on a string stretched between two trees. When on business bent, he is, in summer,

PRODUCING THE FRENCH POODLE STYLE.

always scantily clad, the *tondeur*. He does not sacrifice elegance to ease, and the result is picturesque. His arms are bare and bronzed, his cotton shirt open to the wind at the brawny chest, his trousers are rolled above his knees, and he scorns boots, but wears slippers, for he has to wade often into the river. Others are more considerately attired.

CLIPPING THE HIND-LEGS.

Most *tondeurs* have their regular pitches and never desert them; others wander up and down the banks. These latter will "barber" a dog for a couple of francs, since they are not put to the expense of providing tubs, but just wash the animal afterwards in the river. At such a sum the established *tondeur* would not look but with scorn; indeed, he would hardly wash a dog for the price. The two best-known are MM. Morel and Marie, and the *doyen* of them all is the former, who for a matter of eleven years has, in company with his wife and an assistant, been daily engaged in barbering dogs in the shadow of the Pont de Solferino, on the Quai des Tuileries. Before, he was for a decade

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pitched at the Pont Royal. M. Morel is very proud of the fact that he numbers amongst his clients some of England's aristocracy, who, when in Paris, send their dogs to him. The rival firm of Marie, *tondeur et baigneur*, has its station a few steps farther along on the other side of the bridge.

At any hour of the day one or the other is certain to be seen energetically clipping a dog into decent appearance, while on busy days the spectacle of clients three or four deep patiently sitting awaiting their turn may be witnessed. Friday is the busiest day of the week. Then the clippers are clicking incessantly from morn till eve. Masses of wool, black and white and grey, scud along

STARTING ON HIS BATH.

the stones like clouds across the sky, and bunches of interested idlers hang over the bridge and the steps that lead down to the shore, amused at the sight of a poodle being dressed *en dimanche*.

The *chien mouton* is essentially the family dog with the fairly well off, and holds a very dear place in the feminine heart. Lucky is his lot if his mistress be wealthy, for he will be fed on the best of everything; he will have his wardrobe, including coats for all occasions, even to that for automobiling; he will woo sweet sleep on silk-covered cushions, and in the end be decently buried in the cemetery for dogs, his memory being perpetuated by a monument over a flower-covered grave. When this love of the dog

WASHING.

is understood, the importance of his appearance and the necessity for the *tondeur* is at once apparent. I have seen a lady stop her carriage on the *quai* above and send the footman down with the dog to the barber. And while the lady waited and dreamed above, the footman waited and fidgeted below, saying things that were not for other ears. I have seen ladies, too, who were not servants, bring their dogs to the *tondeur* and sit by the animal's head what time the man clipped away the superfluous wool, coaxing

"SHAMPOO, PLEASE!"

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"Fifi" to be quiet and good with endearing terms and sweetmeats, and imploring the operator to handle the pet gently. When the toilet was finished, such a mistress enveloped the poodle in a jacket and tied up a curl on its head with a silk ribbon.

It is, of course, in the summer that the *tondeur* reaps his harvest—literally and metaphorically—for then most owners have their dogs washed once a week and clipped afresh every fortnight, for the sake of coolness and comfort in the heat; in the colder months a clipping once a month, or even in two months, is the rule, and in some instances the animal's feelings rather than its cleanliness are studied, and it is not allowed a wash for even six weeks at a stretch, in case it might take cold.

To clip a dog scientifically is no easy matter, and unless the animal is quiet under the clippers it becomes one of irritating difficulty. While one man holds the animal across his knees, another runs the clippers up its back, removing the superfluous wool. It is clipped clean from its tail to half-way up its body all round. Its legs are bared, with the exception of narrow rings of hair around the joints, and its features are cleaned so that its long face, with curled moustache, stands out prominently. For its greater comfort it is in the summer completely clipped all over the body and head, the only sign of hair being on the ears and the "bracelets" around the legs.

The clipping finished, the animal is treated to a very thorough bath. There are two tubs, one filled with clear water, the other with a yellow liquid that is especially good for the animal's skin. It is dipped into the first tub, then thoroughly soaped all over with *savon marseille*—specially guaranteed to kill all insects speedily if not painlessly—which is vigorously rubbed in. When the soap has been washed away, a yellow bath follows, and there only remains the drying. A brisk application of a couple of towels from the dozen or so hanging upon the line against the wall, and doggy is ready to have its whiskers combed and curled, and its leg-rings fluffed out, after which it appears as a very dandy amongst dogs, and you certainly would not recognise it as the same animal that descended an hour previously.

It is a lucrative business, that of the *tondeur*, and bad is the day that does not put fifteen to twenty francs into his pockets, while Friday sometimes brings as much as fifty or sixty francs. Morel remembers one day when he "barbered" thirty dogs, aided by his wife and assistant, and earned 150 francs. But that was when competition was less keen than now. Prices range from twenty sous for *un bain simple* to five francs for a thorough clipping and cleaning; and customers are always plentiful, and, so long as the fashion holds, will remain so, for hair will grow.

But the *tondeur's* best customers are those whom he attends at home—women who would not think of allowing their pets to be barbered in the common gaze. For such lucky dogs there is warm water, sweet-scented soap, and their own particular towels of fine linen—

A LADY WAITING FOR HER PET.

luxuries of which their less fortunate brothers never dream, and which some human beings never experience. For such careful attention as he is called upon to give to "dogs in clover," cutting their nails, cleaning their teeth, and even shaving them, that they may look their very best, the *tondeur* is paid anything from ten to twenty francs, and he is practically assured of an income as long as the animal lives; for when once a dog has grown accustomed to being clipped by one particular person, it is with great difficulty that it can be persuaded to consign itself to another pair of hands.

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THE GARDEN OF LIES.

By JUSTUS MILES FORMAN,*

Author of "Journeys End," "Cupid's House Party," etc.

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—A prince of the dominant house in Novodnia has recently, through a most extraordinary and improbable series of deaths, come to the throne as Carol III. So improbable was his succession considered that it was never thought of at all, that he was allowed to marry outside royal circles. Being without fortune, the Prince married a young American woman of great beauty and tremendous wealth. No sooner was he married than occurred this improbable series of deaths which brought him to the throne and—face to face with an extremely embarrassing problem. His wife being not of royal rank—indeed, a commoner—his children by her could not succeed to the throne. There remained then but one course. The marriage had to be regarded as a morganatic one, and a princess of the proper extraction provided. But right at this point arose an obstacle. The Prince refused point blank either to divorce his wife or to marry again in his own rank. The marriage took place in America. While the newly married pair were being driven from the church, the horses attached to the bridal landau took fright and ran away, finally dashing the carriage to pieces against an iron column. The Prince escaped with a few bruises; his wife, on the contrary, was severely injured as to the head—so severely, in fact, that she was still in a condition of unconsciousness and delirium when, a fortnight later, the Prince was called home to Novodnia to ascend the throne. The Princess has now recovered her bodily health, but without regaining any memory of recent events, even her own marriage being unknown to her. Her family have therefore brought her to Paris to place her under the treatment of the great specialist, Sir Gavin MacKenzie. On learning of her marriage, the Princess demands to see her husband, and imagines a conspiracy to keep him from her. The Prince has his work cut out at home to hold the throne against rival factions; yet the doctors fear for the Princess's reason. In a moment of panic they present to the Princess a devil-may-care young Irishman, Denis Mallory, as the husband who is yet to woo his bride; but just as the young couple are really falling in love with one another, news arrives that the Prince is on his way to Paris to claim his wife.

CHAPTER IV.

"OH!" said young Mallory absently. I suppose he had heard the words, but, upon my faith! I don't believe they had conveyed to his mind anything at all. He rose from the broad divan where he had been sitting, and moved over to the little Turkish table littered with pipes and cigarette-boxes and tins of tobacco, and he chose a battered old briar, which he filled and lighted with great deliberation.

"Look you, gentlemen," said he, facing us at last, pipe in hand, "before this—this enterprise of ours goes any further, I wish to correct the footing upon which we—upon which I stand. Last evening I agreed to do my part for—a money consideration. I didn't realise as well as I do now what the thing implied. I was even—intoxicated. I wish you clearly to understand that there is to be no question of money between us. Heaven knows the trick we play is low enough without soiling it further. I play my hand in it because it seems to me there is nothing else to be done. The trick must be played, but let there be no money about it."

I caught Von Altdorf's eyes searching for mine. They were very bright, and he nodded his head and smiled. I thought of his words of the night before, under the awning of the Café d'Alençon, when I had said that I wished I'd shaken hands with Mallory. "You'll wish that more heartily still before the last card's played. Yonder's a man."

But our immediate and pressing danger made everything else seem of little moment.

"Aye, aye, lad!" cried old MacKenzie impatiently. "As ye like! But have ye not heard? The Prince is coming to Paris, and can't be stopped!"

Young Mallory dropped suddenly into a chair, and his teeth shut with a click. All his face seemed to sharpen, whiten, grow in an instant fierce and ready.

"The Prince—coming—to Paris?" he said in a slow whisper. The first white fierceness of his face passed, the animal at bay and ready to fight, and he seemed to be thinking deeply. I learnt to know that pose later on—body sprawled out over the chair, knees apart, hands clasping and relaxing, chin on breast, and those deep eyes of his wide and staring out into vacancy under level brows.

But presently his lips twitched and curved from their hard line into a smile, and he

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sprang to his feet, laughing as if something amused him beyond words. By my faith! there was little humour that the rest of us could see in the situation.

"Why, now!" he cried, laughing still, "why, that's more like it! Now it's to be a game, by Heaven! not just deceiving a helpless girl." He looked about the circle of our glum faces and burst into a roar of laughter, stretching his arms up over his head as if he saw the struggle before him and gloried in it.

"Like old times, by Jove!" he cried. "Aye, it's to be a game—a game worth playing! Come, come, gentlemen, have you all lost your last dear relative on earth? Buck up, buck up!" He clapped Von Altdorf upon the shoulder gaily.

"Come, Colonel," said he, "you in the mourning party, too? Faith, it's a funeral! Come! Have we two sat at our ease before the fire all our lives, that we should turn pale and groan over a danger? Leave that to our friend the Birthday knight and the light o' society here. What have we fought and schemed and plotted for all our lives, Colonel, if we're to lie down at the first hint of difficulty? Think of it! A game to play! We've played before, eh, Colonel? Man, man! doesn't it make your blood tingle? Where's your spirit?"

He stuck the old briar pipe in one corner of his mouth and puffed great clouds from it. His face beamed through the smoke. His eyes were wide and joyous. I'd never seen them quite the same.

And, as I live, there was Von Altdorf on his feet, too, tugging at his grizzled moustache, as was his way when excited. His eyes twinkled, and he put out his hands upon young Mallory's shoulders and shook him gently.

"Aye," said he. "Aye, I've fought and schemed a bit in my time, and I've a drop of blood left to jump on occasion. Aye, we've played before, we two. I wished we'd played together; for you're a man after my own heart. Let Karl come if he likes! Saints above! His wife shan't see him till she's able, if I have to carry him back to Novodnia under my arm!"

Old MacKenzie scowled and twisted in his chair.

"That's all very well, ye two bloodthirsty conspeerators," said he. "But what's to be done? When ye're through with your heroics, maybe ye'll condescend to look at the danger we're in."

As for me, I held a sulky silence. I hadn't relished being called a light of society.

Mallory dropped into a chair and shook his head at the Scotsman with a humorous sigh.

"You've no blood in your body, man," said he, "though I'm not denying that you've sense in your head. And now to business! Will the Prince come alone, or shall we have a half-dozen to deal with?"

"Oh, he'll come alone," said Von Altdorf. "Never you fear—though, for all that, it wouldn't surprise me if half-a-dozen should follow, to spy out what he's doing."

"And they'll be——?" queried Mallory.

"They'll be enemies—Russian jackals, the Czar's playthings!" snarled Von Altdorf, "only waiting their chance to seat their George where Prince Karl sits now—or should be sitting. Great Heavens! he's mad to leave the country at such a time—mad!"

"He's mad for love of his wife," said I; "and who's to blame him? Haven't we all seen her? Wouldn't any one of us leave a throne for her?"

Von Altdorf struck his knee a resounding thwack.

"Love!" he cried. "Love! Shall love stand before the welfare of a nation, man? Shall love wreck a State? Is there no such thing as a ruler's honour and duty? I say he's mad to come here! Heaven knows I'm full enough of pity for the loveliest woman I ever saw; but I serve the Novodnian crown, and I'd serve it ill to countenance Prince Karl's leaving his throne for a woman who can never sit by his side there."

"Yet she's his Princess, right enough," said I stubbornly.

"She's his wife," said Von Altdorf. "Princess by courtesy, if you like. Yet another Princess there must be in time, as you know, or the crown goes to George and his litter."

"But what's to happen eventually?" I persisted. "We're curing a present ill—or trying to; but what's to happen when Madame here regains her health and is told the trick we've played upon her? She'll be the Prince's wife still."

Von Altdorf threw up his hands.

"Heaven knows!" said he. "It's out of our hands. We can't see beyond our present business. There might be a divorce arranged—even against the Prince's will. Madame might be brought to see the necessity of it. Or it's just possible that she might be ennobled—though that's almost out of the question. Don't worry us, man. The future's the future, and its problems haven't

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to be met till to-morrow. To-day's dangers are enough to busy our hands. Heaven knows it would have been simpler if Madame had never recovered from her hurts, though I've no heart for saying it. What's before us now is to keep the Prince from seeing her—for both their sakes—and to get him back to Novodnia as soon as ever we may."

Mallory had been smoking and listening, eyes half closed, and a thoughtful crease between his brows.

"When did you receive the message saying that he'd left Novodnia?" he asked.

"An hour ago," said Von Altdorf. "It was sent last night, *viâ* Belgrade, of course. If he comes through without stopping—and that's what he'll do right enough—he will be here in three days' travel. To-day's Tuesday, isn't it? He started yesterday afternoon. He should reach Paris Thursday. He'll probably come at once to my apartment in the Avenue de l'Observatoire. We've still two days to make ready, you see."

"It wouldn't do, I suppose," suggested Mallory, "to tell him that the Princess has gone back to America? He wouldn't believe it, eh?"

Von Altdorf shook his head.

"That wouldn't do at all—he'd know better. He's had semi-weekly reports right along from MacKenzie. He knows she's here in MacKenzie's care. Besides, if he were really convinced that she'd gone to America, upon my word, I believe he'd be off there himself. You don't know the Prince. When he sets his mind upon a thing, he's apt to get it."

"He won't get this," said young Mallory shortly, and his teeth shut again with a click. "Ah, well! I see nothing for it but simply to refuse to let him see her—to tell him she's in too dangerous a state to risk a shock. It's a poor excuse and a bold one, but, curse it! he's got to swallow what we've a mind to tell him. Perhaps some better plan will turn up meanwhile. We must trust something to the cards as they're dealt—— Egad! we might do worse than to kidnap him and ship him back to Novodnia, as Von Altdorf here says, under somebody's arm."

MacKenzie grunted.

"I observe," said he sourly, "a certain lack o' timeedity about you, lad. Boldness is all well enough; but man, man! discretion's the better part o' valour. Look before ye leap, or ye may land in the pit."

"Heaven's grace, MacKenzie!" cried young Mallory with a laugh, "'tis the pit we're in now, and some great leaping it's going to take to win out o' the same. You can't see the ground about when you're in a pit, MacKenzie; you can only leap, by the grace o' God, and trust to your luck as to where you land—— Ah, well! enough of that. What's to do now? Nothing but wait, I take it. Shall we meet here to-morrow at this time? I've an engagement—by your leave—with Madame the Princess in the garden at three. And now I'm for my dinner. Faith, how conspiracy whets a man's appetite! Who's with me?"

"I'm with you," said I.

CHAPTER V.

We walked over to the Boulevard St. Michel—it was on the edge of dark, and the streets were full of home-coming labourers and students and shop-girls—and turned down that wicked and happy thoroughfare past the darkened portals of the Bal Bullier, down to where the cafés shone resplendent with their brilliantly lighted terrasses, and where one had to elbow one's way through a packed throng of swaggering students and ladies of a pronounced and friendly bearing.

The good old Boul' Miche'!—your pardon! I would say the bad old Boul' Miche'! How it comes up before me now, though I like to pretend that I'm grown old and discreet and very respectable, and done with such follies. How it comes up before me, if only I shut my eyes and forget that I'm just round the corner from Piccadilly, lapped in the chastened sobriety of London—that I'm going out to dine presently at my club with a curate and two barristers—— Lights and chatter, and the clink of glasses upon little, round, iron tables, dusk growing to darkness out beyond in the street, the clatter of hoofs that strike fire from the paving-stones, a huge, ungainly steam tram that puffs and pants its way up the hill, a whiff of perfume from the trees that line the kerb, a never-ending throng of students crowding past—étudiants and étudiantes, bearded students and moustached students, old style students with long beards and capes and soft hats, smoking their queer, ugly pipes—vieux Jacobs—and smarter, newer style students, with shining hats and padded frock-coats, smoking cigarettes; Jews, Germans, Russians, Greeks, negroes, doctors, lawyers, merchants, thieves—and ladies with pompadours and a ready smile. That is the Boul' Miche'! There's no care there, nor worry nor thought for the morrow. C'est pas trop sérieux, voyez-vous,

the old Boul' Miche' ! Cares have been left in the lecture-room or atelier or lodging. One drops them with a shake the moment one steps into the gay street. One digs one's hands into one's pockets, one puffs a devil-may-care cloud to the gloomy skies, and moves with an unconscious swagger towards one's favourite terrasse, the Panthéon, or the d'Harcourt (alas !), or the Sourse ; and there one settles into a chair behind a tiny table and orders one's absinth—Pernod, or Cusénier—one's Turin bitter, one's sirop à l'eau de Seltz, one's vermouth sec, and lingers over it through the "green hour," listening contentedly to the chatter about one, to the calling of names, Fifines and Saras and Maries and Colettes ; Georges and Alphonses and Édouards ; to the desperate cries of overworked waiters who struggle beneath trays of glasses or hold five bottles by the necks with one set of fingers.

"V'là, M'sieur ! v'là, v'là !" to an importunate customer, "versez, versez !" to the "omnibus" who pours the coffee into the glass they have banged down before you.

Then, later, when one has drained the last drop of one's apératif and paid one's seven or eight sous, one rises lazily and makes one's way, arm-in-arm with Georges or Édouard, or, alas ! Fifine or Colette, to one's favourite restaurant—Wiber's, where the Châteaubriants are so thick and juicy, and the Burgundy—that Chambertin at four francs the pint—so rich ; or across the street to Boulant's ; or down to the little Duval ; or even over the river to the Palais Royal arcades—to Larue's, to Marguery's, to a dozen delightful places.

And after dinner, why, it's all to do over again—the sitting at a terrasse under the big awning, though over a coffee and a liqueur this time, till, if it be a Sunday or a Thursday or a Saturday night, one must rise towards ten o'clock and move with the throng up the hill, far up past the lighted cafés, to the place where Maréchal Ney waves his sword on high, and where the great sculptured arch stands over the portal to the Bal Bullier ; then under the arch and down upon the great polished floor, where Fifine and Colette will pull at your coat-lapels and beg you to waltz with them, à l'Américain.

Ah, the good old Boul' Miche' !—your pardon ! I would say the bad old Boul' Miche' ! It brings a rakish gleam to the eyes, a ribald flush to the cheek, of a certain sedate and Britishly respectable old codger who's engaged to dine, later on, with a curate and two barristers. Hélas ! he'd rather dine at Wiber's with Fifine or Colette —but he wouldn't admit it to the curate.

* * * * *

We stopped—Mallory and I—at the Café du Panthéon, and after some trouble found a vacant table on the crowded terrasse. Quite half the people at the tables seemed to know Denis Mallory, and hailed him vociferously with outstretched hands or raised glasses. "St. Denis," they called him—I grievously fear it was in irony—— Oh, well ! there were quite enough of them, dear old vagabonds, who knew me as well, and had a pet name for me, too. I mayn't cavil at Mallory.

He took absinth—Pernod—in spite of my frown. I remember that he even spoke sharply to the waiter for pouring him, as he thought, too small an allowance. It made me curse to see him gulp down the half of it without lowering his glass.

We went on, later, down to Boulant's—because you may find no such cancales on the Boulevard as at Boulant's—where that majestic personage, the Dame du Comptoir, had a welcoming smile for us, and for Mallory a rallying jest. We mounted to one of the smaller rooms au premier and took a table in the corner. Mallory's greeting to the pleasing young person in the red hair and white apron, who put the carte before us, bespoke an acquaintance of a certain intimacy. And we ordered a great many cancales, those queer, yellow oysters—that look like clams and taste like seaweed and copper—one grows tremendously keen on them—and a filet mignon all smothered in sauce béarnaise, and some flageolets maître d'hôtel—my word ! I can taste them now—and a wonderful crisp salad of lettuce and chicory, with cheese to come after—Pont l'Evêque—and coffee, and for wine, a certain strange and delicious vin gris de Touraine of '82. I had to quarrel with Mallory over this. He wanted an atrociously heavy and potent Spanish Pajarete of '75, a veritable sirop, for which Boulant's is famous.

He was curiously quiet during the meal, frowning and distrait. Nothing could rouse him—neither the superexcellence of the filet mignon nor my attempts at wit. He drank his vin gris de Touraine as if it were rouge ordinaire at fifty centimes the litre, never sniffed its exquisite bouquet nor closed his eyes in content over its keen flavour. Something seemed weighing upon him, depressing him beyond hope of recall.

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"He put out his hands upon young Mallory's shoulders and shook him gently."

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"Come, come, man!" said I in despair, "I've asked you a question twice, and you've stared through me. What's got into you? An hour ago you were gay enough, Heaven knows! Come, wake up, tell us your troubles."

Mallory pulled himself together with a little, shivering jerk.

"Someone walking over my grave!" he muttered.

"Eh, lad, eh?"

"Aye, I'm a bit blue. The devils have me—papillons noirs! I've been seeing things."

"Now, by Heaven!" said I, "if you'd just see us a way out of our troubles, while you're at it, it would be jolly worth while. Just see us a way to win our game, will you?"

"Win?" said Mallory in his low, dull voice. "Aye, we'll win right enough. Never fear that we'll will. We, say I? You'll win, Creighton, man—the rest of you, not I, by my soul! I never win, I've no luck. You'll win, but I'll lose."

And to that I found nothing to reply, for, as I live, I saw nothing that Denis Mallory might win from the game. If he won his hand, 'twas for the Prince, not himself—and I'd not seen Mallory's face down there in the garden with Madame for nothing, nor when he was told that Karl was on his way to Paris.

"I never win," said he hopelessly, fingering the little cheese-knife that lay by his plate, and marking with it upon the white cloth. "I play my hand, I fight my battle or plot my scheme, and some other man takes the prize. I've no luck. Look you! You know what I've done—why am I not rich? Why isn't my coat covered with fool little jewelled crosses? I've won fortunes for other men, and orders for their breasts, but no fortune for my pocket and no ribbons for my buttonhole. No, I've no luck."

"Oh, as for that," said I, still trying to cheer him up, "what are any of us to win out of this business? We're in it, just as you are, to save a woman, to try a fall with Fate. There's no question of our getting anything out of it."

But he wouldn't be drawn.

"I never win," he muttered absently, still marking with the little knife upon the cloth. "What's the use of playing?"

"Why, none!" said I in a cheery tone. "None at all! Let's chuck it up! It's a sorry business—let it take care of itself! Chuck it up, man, chuck it up!"

That drew him at last.

"Chuck it up?" he cried savagely. "Not while I've the use of my arms and legs! Are you mad, Creighton? Chuck it up? Great Heavens! if I thought you meant that—— Ah! come, come, say you're joking, old chap. Don't give me a turn like that, don't mind me if I talk nonsense. I'm—down on my luck. Let's get away from this place. Have you finished? My faith, I've a millstone about my neck!"

"Where to now?" I asked out in the street.

"Home!" said Mallory. "And come you with me. I've no taste for cafés to-night."

We walked all the way to the Rue Boissonade in silence. Mallory, it was quite plain, was in no mood for talk, and I'd no mind to disturb him.

They are quaint little studios, this row in the Rue Boissonade. They sit back from the narrow street behind plots of grass and shrubbery, the whole shut in by high iron palings at the street side. They rise but two storeys, gabled and picturesque, and the tiny loge of the concierge sits protectingly out to the fore by the common gate in the palings, like an officer before his file of men. The studio that Mallory occupied, he had taken, furnished, for a term of months from some man who was away in Algiers on a sketching tour. It was the ground floor, a little place hung about with Eastern draperies and altar-cloths and such, and with the most amazing assortment of weapons—those of Mallory's contribution—that ranged from a Moorish rifle, some eight feet long, to several pairs of very serviceable foils and épées de combat, some sharpened, some buttons. There was a divan under the great north light, a big steamer-chair of osier, and numberless decorative, artistic, and highly uncomfortable benches, chairs, and stools of carved wood.

Mallory made some lights, and then dropped down upon the big divan with a sigh of weariness.

"I'm good company—eh, Creighton, old chap?" said he.

"You're dashed poor company!" said I frankly. "What's got into you, man? Can't you tell a chap? I've never seen you like this. Out with it! Open confession's good for the soul, or something like that. It says so in the books."

"Confession?" sneered Mallory between the hands that held his head. "Confession, say you? Egad! should I start in confessing, you'd die of horror; moreover, 'twould take a week's time. No, no, lad; I'll not make you a father confessor."

And then, though I didn't know how he'd

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take it, and was ready for a burst of rage, I went over and laid a hand on his bowed shoulder.

"Denis, old chap," said I, "I think I know how the land lies, and Heaven knows I'm—well, I'm sorry. It couldn't be foreseen. It's nobody's fault, but it's none the less cruel for all that. Love's a queer thing, Denis. It won't be hidden nor it won't be coaxed. You may look for it a year and never find it, or it may run fair into you when you turn the corner. Kill it, old chap, kill it! You must; or, by Heaven! where shall we all be in a fortnight's time? Kill it! You've fought before—aye, and won, too. You've got to win this time for all our sakes."

But he sprang to his feet past me and moved up and down the room, his lips tight and his hands strained to fists.

"And what if I don't?" he cried. "What if I fight for myself this time? What if I chuck the rest of you over? Haven't I been fighting for some other man all my life? What if I fight for myself this time?"

He paused an instant, with one hand on the writing-table that stood near, and his face changed, softened, and smiled a bit under its frown. His eyes were wide and very far away.

"Fight for myself, and—win? Aye, lad, I believe I'd win—win. Think of it, think of it! What a life to come!" His voice strained and broke, and he took up his march again through the room, back and forth, his hands pressed over his face.

"I tell you, you can't know what I went through to-day in that garden yonder, playing the lowest, scurviest trick that ever was planned, upon the loveliest woman on God's wide earth! She's the one woman in all the world I could have loved for a lifetime, slaved for, starved for, worshipped as I've never worshipped my Maker! And there was I, lying to her, fast as my tongue could wag, telling her that it was honour kept me from her till now—honour, mind you, honour! Why, I'd sold my last shreds of honour the night past for forty pounds a month, sold myself to lie to her! What's to keep me, I say, from playing out the lie further than you'd planned when you bought me? You've left me no self-respect—what's to keep me from chucking you over?"

"Honour, Denis," said I; "that same honour that you never sold us; for no money has passed—you refused it this very day—the faith of a gentleman."

"Gentleman—bah!" he cried. "A gentleman you wouldn't give your hand to last night, a gentleman good for nothing, a gentleman with an ill name, with a misspent youth behind him, a gentleman you picked at once to do a blackguardly trick for hire! What am I, to shy at scruples?"

"Yet you'll shy at them," said I.

He went to the little window at the rear of the studio, and let up the shade and pushed out the swinging shutters. A cool breath of chestnut and lilac came up out of the gulf of darkness where the great trees stood arow, their tops laced against a starlit sky. Light shone yellow from the upper windows of the old convent beyond. The sound of a piano came very faintly down through the garden.

"She's there, where one of those lights shines," said Mallory in a half whisper. "My lady's there. God keep her! God bring her sweet sleep!"

He stood for a long time staring into the darkness, till I rose and moved about the room, filling and lighting a pipe and making myself comfortable. I think he had quite forgotten that I was there. Then at last he closed the shutters with a long sigh and turned back into the room. His face was drawn and haggard. He stood a moment irresolute, and then moved over to a cupboard in the wall, from which he took a bottle and some glasses and a carafe of water. It was an absinth bottle—Pernod.

"Oh, I say, Denis!" I cried. "Not that! You can't afford to fuddle your brain now. Think what we've to do in the next few days. Think of to-morrow, man! Besides, absinth's no evening drink, anyhow; it's an apératif. Go easy!"

He poured out the liquor till the glass was half full, and added the water; but he gave me a quick side-glance that said: "No interfering!"

"Who are you, lad, to teach me the uses of Pernod?" said he, and drank. "The milk-and-water invalids who drink for an appetite don't know their drink. Eh! but I do, I do! It's the golden drink that charms away troubles. It's the cup o' life to lift a man out of pain!" He swallowed the remainder of the glass quickly and filled another.

"Eh! look at it, look at it!" he cried, fondly turning the goblet before his eyes—"molten opals, liquid fire! Saw ye ever such colour, lad?"

It was strange how, as his tongue loosened, a faint brogue came to it, an Irish roll of which he'd scarcely a trace, sober.

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"To-morrow, say you, Teddy?

"Ah, me beloved, fill the cup that clears
To-day of past regrets an' future fears:
To-morrow! Why, to-morrow I may be
Myself with yesterday's sev'n thousand years."

He filled another glass, and his eyes brightened.

"Me little green devil that's a great green god!" said he, as if the shimmering liquor heard his voice. "Me little green devil that's a great green god, take me to Paradise—lose me past regrets an' future fears. I'm weary o' problems an' fightin' an' heartache. Unravel me the Master-Knot o' Human Fate, little green devil! Find me the key to the door. I'm weary o' searching.

"Heav'n but the vision o' fulfilled desire,
And hell the shadow from a soul on fire!

"Show me the vision, little green devil, to cool me bones, for I've been in hell with a soul on fire." He dropped his face into his hands upon the table, and his shoulders heaved.

"In hell have I been five years, little green devil," he muttered, "with a soul on fire and never a hand to pull me up—plenty of arms to push me down—round arms, white arms, soft arms; but never a hand to pull me out—till now! An' now 'tis a hand I mayn't take.

"Oh, Love—no Love! All the noise below, Love!
Groanings all and moanings—none o' life I lose?
All o' life's a cry just o' weariness and woe,
Love——

"Ah, little green devil, take me to Paradise!"

His head rose with a jerk, and his eyes met mine, blinked and sharpened to recognition—and he laughed.

"Heart's blood, but ye're a Death's-head!" he cried. "Ye think I'm drunk? Oh, Teddy, Teddy! that ye could suspect such of a friend! Drunk, say you, drunk? By the gods!"

He sprang up, a dare-devil light in his eye, and pulled down from the wall a pair of foils with buttons, and tossed me one across the table.

"You shall see if I'm drunk!" he cried. "Defend yourself, man, defend yourself, or, by my word, I'll run you through! Take up your foil, I say!" And he backed out into the middle of the room, flourishing his blade and upsetting chairs as he went. He was very, very drunk; but, drunk or sober, I knew his skill with the foils. There were few better swordsmen in Europe, as any maître-d'armes in Paris would have told you. Drunk; there may have been a dozen who could best him, sober—I believe there were three. Two of them were, and are, famous Italians, and one an equally famous Frenchman.

"Guard yourself, man!" called Mallory, stamping with his free foot; and I fell into guard to humour him. His sword-play was like flashes of lightning. I had scarce caught his eye and made a half-dozen instinctive parries, when there was a crash among the delft plates hung in a far corner. I stood agape, empty-handed, and Mallory, hands on knees, swayed back and forth, roaring with laughter.

"Drunk!" he gasped between breaths, "drunk, eh? Oh, man, man, ye're a tailor! Ye're no swordsman! Disarmed like a recruit, and ye fancy yerself at the foils!" He prodded me in the stomach with a playful point and roared again.

Then, quite suddenly, his foil clashed upon the floor, and he caught his hands to his head, reeling towards a chair. I grasped him and guided him into the seat. His face had gone very white.

"I—I've got it—in the head—again, Teddy!" he whispered, "got it in the—head—again!" He lay still for a few moments, eyes twitching spasmodically. "Sometimes it—comes," he said, after a little, "a hard, tight, band-iron, I fancy—squeezes round your head—ye know, squeezes horribly, till your skull cracks—you can hear it! Sometimes—listen, man!—sometimes we can't quite reach heaven, the little green devil and I. There's a chap at the gate, and he calls out: 'Who's there?' 'Mallory!' say I—'Denis Mallory, a poor devil who's been in hell for five years.; for pity let me in!' An' then sometimes, lad, he laughs and goes off. 'Wait till a hand leads ye here,' says he. An' we wander away, the little green devil and I, away 'tween worlds where it's cold grey dawn."

He reached for the glass and drank a swallow before I could snatch it from him.

"An' sometimes," he went on in his hoarse whisper, "sometimes I can't even get started. I sit here an' sip an' sip and wait, with me head goin' queerer and queerer, an' the other end o' the room yonder pulls out long like a camera, an' the ceilin' an' the walls begin to come together, tryin' to squeeze me, tryin' their hardest, curse 'em! Some day they'll do it. Look, look! By Heaven, they're at it now! Look, man! the ceilin' is bending down! It's tryin' to catch me!" He snatched the half-filled glass in his hand

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"'Don't—let it—catch me, Teddy!'"

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and hurled it across the room, where it smashed against the wall. Then in an instant he had whipped up his foil from where it lay upon the floor and was in guard, eyes burning, teeth clenched, and breath that came in great gasps. He lunged fiercely with the foil, and a chair went over with a crash. The foil snapped near the hilt, dropped from his hand, and he fell back into my arms.

"Don't—let it—catch me, Teddy!" he gasped. "If it catches me once—I'm done for."

CHAPTER VI.

"SHOW Colonel von Altdorf in," said Miss Jessica Mannering. Colonel von Altdorf, buttoned very tightly into his military-looking frock-coat, bowed profoundly from the doorway, and again over the hand that Miss Mannering extended to him.

"I'm glad you're come," said the young woman, beaming upon him, "for I want to ask such a tremendous lot of questions!"

"My very dear mademoiselle!" cried Colonel von Altdorf in concealed horror, "it is my profession to avoid answering questions."

"But a woman's questions, Colonel!" protested Miss Mannering.

"Ah!" said Von Altdorf non-committally.

"They're different, you know," she concluded, nodding her small head.

"Ah!" said Von Altdorf again, and pulled at his grizzled moustache.

"Still," proceeded the girl, "I suppose you have known a great many women in—in the course of your career, so that you're accustomed to their questions."

"I've met a few," admitted Von Altdorf; "and, yes, they've been fairly good at questions."

"All sorts, of course," sighed Miss Mannering.

"The questions, mademoiselle?"

"The women."

"Why, yes," said Von Altdorf, smiling grimly. "Why, yes; as you say, mademoiselle, all sorts, but each sort good at asking questions. I should say they differed but little."

"The women, Colonel?"

"The questions."

"Now, first," began Miss Mannering, marking with a slim forefinger—Colonel von Altdorf sighed—"first, what are you going to do when the Prince arrives, the real Prince, I mean? Sir Gavin tells me that he will probably be here to-morrow."

"Why, as to that, mademoiselle," said Von Altdorf, "if Fate deals us, meanwhile, no better card, or if Chance shows us at the time no better way, we shall tell him the whole truth, show him that we took the only way, desperate though it was, to save Madame, and beg him to return to Novodnia without seeing her."

"And do you think he will do it?"

"Ah! that no man can tell. I have known Prince Karl from childhood, mademoiselle, but I'll not guarantee what he may do at a crisis. He loves his wife, I believe."

The girl shook her head and sighed.

"Poor Prince!" said she gently. "Yes, I think he loves his wife; but she, Colonel, will never love the Prince. She didn't love him when she married him. She liked him, she was fond of him somewhat; but love him? Ah, no!"

"It was the title, then?" asked Colonel von Altdorf.

"Why, yes, in a way," said the girl. "Yes, I suppose it was the title; but not to her, Colonel, to her people. They almost forced her into the marriage. Ah, yes! that can be done even in our free country, even in democratic America. Indeed, it's done oftener than people think. She loved no other man, she liked the Prince, and I think he was honestly in love with her—can you wonder? So she married him."

"You said, mademoiselle," observed Von Altdorf, "you said a moment ago that Madame will never love the Prince. Yet wives have been known to come cold to the altar, but waken to love as time passed."

The girl turned about on the swinging stool where she sat, and moved a hand up the keys of the grand piano that stood there, in soft little arpeggios. She frowned a bit as if she were puzzled, undecided.

"What did you mean, mademoiselle?" said Colonel von Altdorf.

The girl turned again towards him. "I saw her face," said she, "when she came up through the garden with Mr. Mallory, an hour ago, and said 'Good-bye' to him at the porch."

"Great Heavens!" said Colonel von Altdorf under his breath.

"Last night," continued Miss Mannering, "after she had met him in the garden for the first time and spent an hour with him, she slept hardly at all, but tossed in her bed till past midnight, when she rose and put on a dressing-gown and sat before the fire in her chamber. I found her there. She kept me beside her for an hour, and would talk only of Mr. Mallory.

"'How I must have loved him, Jess,' she said. 'How I must have loved him, long

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ago, before it—it all happened, all this dreadful illness! He's so splendid, Jessica! so big and strong, and so tender and—dear! I didn't know princes ever were so. Don't you envy me, child? He wanted to come to me long ago, he starved to come to me, but he wouldn't because he was needed in his country. Ah! isn't that a man, Jess? He loved his honour and his duty more than he loved me. Isn't that a man to worship? Jess, Jess, I'm too happy to sleep—what time is it? One o'clock? One, two, three, eleven till noon, and three more, fourteen great hours, Jessica, till I shall see him again. Ah, child! have you seen his smile? Have you heard his voice when it's low and deep and tender? Fourteen hours! Give me something to make me sleep, or I shall be counting the minutes.'

"That's how she talked through the night, Colonel. Do you wonder that I said she'd never love the real Prince? She's nervous still, you see—ah, so very nervous; and far from strong; so that she feels things keenly, almost hysterically. She lets herself go as she wouldn't if she were well. Ah, Colonel von Altdorf, what's to be done when she finds out the truth, as find it out she must, of course, in time?"

Von Altdorf dropped a heavy hand upon his knee and sighed.

"Ask your questions of the good God, mademoiselle," said he. "Who am I, that I should answer them? I've grown grey in the plots and schemes of diplomacy," he went on presently. "I've played strange hands in strange games, mademoiselle; but whenever Fate sat down across the table and threw against me, I was beaten. She's a queer lady, Fate. She takes strange freaks, and no man may say what she'll turn to next. I used to take a boy's delight in trying to thwart her, in matching my brains against her course; but as I grow old, I know more and more that no man can beat or check her. She's taken our game out of our hands when we least looked for it. She'll play it to her own ends, and God have mercy on us all! We'll still do our best to avert catastrophe and to save unhappiness, but—— Fate plays the game, not we."

"But you'll not let the Prince see her?" cried Miss Mannering.

"Not I!" said Von Altdorf stoutly—"not if it's humanly possible to prevent it. Trust me for that. He shan't see her. Alas, mademoiselle! it is of the false Prince I'm thinking."

"Ah, yes, yes!" she murmured, "Mr. Mallory! Oh, Colonel, I—I saw his face, too, when they came up from the garden! It was a tragedy. Tell me of him, Colonel von Altdorf. I think one would pin one's faith to him at the first look in his eyes."

"He is a gallant gentleman," said Colonel von Altdorf, "if I am a judge of men. Further than that I know little. He has had a varied and unhappy life, and he has certain things to struggle against even now. Alas! I fear we have given him, amongst us, a greater thing than all against which to struggle—— If only we'd foreseen that possibility! Our hopes and our fears, mademoiselle, hang upon the shoulders of Denis Mallory."

"And they've been together again to-day," mused the girl.

"Aye, and will be to-morrow!" cried Von Altdorf. "In Heaven's name, mademoiselle! what of it? What if the lad does fall in love with her, and she with him? She's another man's wife, and that ends it! Heaven knows I regret it all deeply enough! Heaven knows it's a sad and cruel business, but it can't be helped; and when it's over, when she's well enough to be told the truth, they'll have to part, that's all."

"But what if love prove stronger than honour, Colonel?" said the girl, musingly as before. "What if Mr. Mallory—aye, and the Princess, too, when she knows the truth—find love the stronger—throw you over, leave you in the lurch?"

"Why, as for that, mademoiselle," said Von Altdorf slowly, a bit awkwardly, "love has not come my way often. Love and diplomacy have little in common, speak different languages, though occasionally diplomacy must use love, of a sort, to gain its ends. It may be that there is love great enough to do what you say—— No, I'll trust the lad! He'd never play us false who put our faith in him. Suffer he may, and, I fear, must, but he'll never throw us over nor bring shame upon the lady he loves. He'll remember that she's another man's wife—— Hark, what's that?"

It was the Princess Eleanor singing in one of the rooms beyond. The voice grew louder as she came along the passage outside, and died away slowly as she mounted the stairs. She sang in a sweet, hushed voice—a happy little voice, tender and low—an old song of Lovelace's—

"Yet this inconstancy is such
As thou, too, shalt adore;
I could not love thee, dear, so much
Loved I not honour more."

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"There's your answer, mademoiselle," said Colonel von Altdorf, rising to his feet; "and now I have the honour to bid you 'Good day.'" He held her hand a moment, smiling down into her face half-whimsically, half-sadly.

"We're all fellow-conspirators," said he, "and conspiracy's a sorry business, even in a good cause. Your part must be with Madame. Watch over her, care for her as only a woman and an intimate can, and pray for the tangle to straighten itself. We'll do our best, all of us, for her happiness. Maybe the thing will turn out well, after all. Fate's a queer lady, and plays strange games. She may play a stranger one here than we know of."

CHAPTER VII.

"How did you happen to want to marry me, Karl?" demanded the Princess Eleanor, athirst for information. It was the third day of their meeting.

"I saw you in a carriage, a victoria, driving in the Park one day—the Central Park, isn't it? In New York, you know." He felt quite safe about these points now, for he had been painstakingly coached by the resourceful Miss Mannering.

"Why, but that," objected the Princess, wondering a little, "that's no reason at all. Men don't want to marry girls just because they've seen them once on the street."

"Oh, don't they, though?" cried Denis Mallory. "Well, maybe they don't, ordinary girls. I never wanted to marry any other girl because I'd seen her once at a distance. But you're so absurdly different, you know."

"I'm not," declared the Princess, with a certain lack of conviction, a certain obvious willingness to be disputed. "Am I?" she added encouragingly. "How?"

Mallory waited till she raised her head and her eyes met his. It always gave him a little shock, a quick catching of the breath, to meet her eyes.

"You're the most unspeakably beautiful thing that God ever dreamed of and made on the waking," said he. "You're flowers and music and the thrill of love made human shut into one sweet body. Ah, my lady! you're the break o' day to a soul that's been shivering in the dark! Different from other women? Are there other women? I suppose so, but I've not seen them, nor heard them, nor thought of them, since I met you. I've seen nothing but your eyes and your smile and all the perfect loveliness of you, night and day. And I've heard nothing but your voice from morning till morning. It's in my ears always, like the lilt of an old, sweet song. And I've thought of nothing but you till my mind will grasp no other thing, till my brain's a mere machine that throws pictures of you before me without rest, waking, or sleeping. Different from other women? Oh, my lady, my lady!"

The Princess Eleanor's face was hidden in her hands. Her little ears and her neck were crimson as the long wrap that she wore.

"Ah! you're a goddess, my lady, come down from—somewhere, to make a god of a very worthless and undeserving young chap. A goddess, with a goddess's eyes and bearing, but oh, a woman's smile and a woman's blush! Such a very human goddess, Eleanor, that one must worship, but that one isn't afraid of! It's woman as much as goddess, my lady; and oh, my heart is in the dust under her feet!"

"Ah! not goddess, Karl, not goddess!" cried the Princess Eleanor through the hands that covered her face. "Just a woman! such a very human woman, like other women! Just a girl who—who feels her heart throb and tremble when you tell her she's beautiful, just a girl who's starving for one man's love."

But young Mallory gripped the edge of the old stone seat with straining fingers and forced back the words that rushed to his lips.

"Great Heavens, what have I done?" he cried inwardly, aghast at his own outbreak. "Broken faith with them all! And they trusted me! Oh, you blackguard! you blackguard! Is there anything you won't fall to? And I'd sworn to myself never to let it come to that, never to say a word of outright love to her. Ah, you blackguard! Squirm out of it now if you can."

He turned about to the girl, shaking his head sadly.

"Forgive me, Eleanor," said he, "I—I've broken faith with you in a sort of way, haven't I? I was to give you time, not to press you. I was to let you come gradually to know me, care for me—if you could. And here am I making desperate love to you almost in the beginning! It isn't easy not to make love to you, my lady. Forgive me! I won't do it again—soon."

The Princess Eleanor smiled to him adorably through wet lashes, and Mallory clung to the edge of the old stone seat.

"Ah, yes, yes, Carlo," she breathed; "give me a little time. A girl shrinks from her

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"'Now, first, began Miss Mannering."

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surrender, even when—when she aches to make the surrender. It's a girl's queer nature to be so. Don't make me tell you that I—love you yet, even if I want to. Give me time, Karl, time for my love-dreams, for my girl's fears and qualms and imaginings. Don't take me too quickly by storm, for I'm woefully weak, my Prince, and I'd be in your arms in a moment. Come, we must walk; we've sat still too long. Hook the cape for me at my throat, Carlo—ah, no, no! perhaps—perhaps you'd better—not. I'll hook it, so! Now come! There won't be many lilacs to fall in my hair to-day. See, they're nearly gone. Ah! but the chestnuts are a heaven of sweet odours! Isn't our garden beautiful, mon Prince? Isn't it perfect?" She threw out her arms to the golden sunshine, and her eyes closed.

"It's a perfect world, Carlo mio! It's all sunshine and love and sweet odours! And the shadows are past and gone. Oh, my Prince, it's good to be alive!"

She moved over to the little gravel path that ran under the wall, and Mallory followed her. She sang under her breath as she walked, a little old song, very sweet and low. It was—

"Yet this inconstancy is such
As thou, too, shalt adore."

Her face was flushed and softly smiling, rosy with happiness, and her blue eyes were half closed.

"Tell me, Karl," said she, after a time, "how is it that you speak such perfect English? I've known many Europeans who spoke it well, even idiomatically, but there's always a little difference, a little quality one can't describe, that makes it foreign. You'd know it wasn't their native tongue. You speak it as if you had been born to it."

"Oh! as for that," said Mallory, "I've always spoken English. I was taught it from the cradle. You see, my mother was part English. Faith! I can speak it with an Irish brogue, if you like. Oh! my English is as natural to me as yours. And for once," he added inwardly, "that's no lie. You don't know half my accomplishments," he went on aloud. "I can do no end of things that would surprise you, really they would. I used to write for the newspapers—before I came to the throne, you know—money was at times a bit scarce in those days. Ah! beautiful things I wrote!"

"Poetry?" cried the Princess Eleanor eagerly.

"No, not poetry—Heaven forbid!"

"Ah! but you can, I know," she insisted. "I know you can. Carlo mio—will you write me a poem? Just the littlest bit of a one. There was a man—oh! ages ago—who wrote poems to me. They were so silly! *Please* will you write me a poem, Carlo, if I'll be very, very good? All about me, you know. See what a vain little cat I am!"

"I will not," said Mallory with decision. "I will put on a little red jacket and a collar with a chain, and be dragged about the streets after a hand-organ if that would amuse you, or I'll climb trees or stand on my head; but I'll write no poems for anybody. There are depths to which I haven't yet sunk—though, upon my word, I hadn't suspected them."

The Princess sighed wistfully.

"I should have liked a poem," she grieved. "Still, if you won't do a little thing like that for me, I suppose I shall have to go without it."

She turned to him with a soft laugh of infinite content, of joy and happiness. She put up her two hands clasped upon his breast, leaning upon him, smiling into his eyes.

"Ah! you shan't be teased!" she cried. "Men hate poetry, don't they? Great, big, strong, fighting men like you. You shan't be teased, my Prince. I'm going to be nice to you, *very* nice."

They were standing under the little window in the studio wall. There came suddenly, from above, the sound of voices—quick, hoarse exclamations, and movements as of a struggle. Then, all at once, a man burst through the white curtains and poised an instant, one leg over the window-ledge, and sprang to the ground before them, half falling as he leaped, so that he sprawled upon the black earth on hands and knees.

He was on his feet and facing them in a moment. He was a rather small man, under medium height, swarthy of complexion, and with very black hair. He had large and dark eyes, and a fierce little moustache that turned up sharply at the ends.

The man's breast heaved with a stormy breathing that choked his utterance. His face was flushed, and his hands shook with rage. He seemed scarcely to look at the Princess Eleanor, but fixed his eyes upon young Denis Mallory in a glare so savage that the Irishman instinctively drew back a pace, thrusting the girl behind him, so that his body sheltered her.

"Well?" said he in a puzzled tone. "Well? what is it?" Then, all in a flash, the truth burst upon him.

"You—you blackguard!" cried the man thickly; "you dog! you thief!" He spoke

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in French, and his rage was so great that his tongue would only with difficulty form the sounds. It was as if he wrenched each word from his breast with a visible effort.

"You—you wolf in the fold!" he cried, "you shall pay for—this, curse you! with your life!" He waved his hand helplessly and leaned back against the stone wall, panting.

The Princess Eleanor made a tottering step forward, holding by Mallory's arm with both her hands. Her face was very white, and she stared at the man before her with wide, burning eyes and parted lips.

"Carlo, Carlo!" she cried in a half whisper, "who is—that man? What does he want? It's so—so strange! I seem to have—to have seen him before—somewhere—— His face is—— Why, let me think! It's all so strange! I *must* have seen him before. What does he want, Karl? Who is he?"

Mallory drew the girl back once more, very gently, till she stood behind him, and his left arm held her about the shoulders. His face had gone a bit pale, and his jaws very firm and set. He never took his eyes from those of the short, swarthy man by the wall. They gleamed steadily under drawn brows. I should not have cared to face Denis just then.

"This man, Eleanor," said he slowly, in a cold, hard voice that bore a threat, "this man is a very rash and foolish person whom I—and others, have tried to do a service—a service," he repeated, still looking into the other's eyes. "But he is so foolish and headstrong as to wish to do me a harm in return—so ungrateful and so cowardly as to be willing to bring great risk to those whom he pretends to—love, all for a childish spite." He shook his head—eyes never moving—and his arm tightened a bit about her shoulders, drew her closer. "But he'll not be allowed to bring harm to them, Eleanor. They shall be protected at any cost—of his life or of mine. That's all you need know. And now I must take you back to the house. This—man must be dealt with at once. Come, Eleanor."

The swarthy man by the wall raised one hand in a queer little helpless gesture, and his head drooped.

Mallory drew the girl away, and they moved up the gravel path towards the house. She clung still to his arm, and her eyes were troubled, puzzled, and anxious.

"You'll not let him harm you, Karl?" she begged softly. "He looked so desperate, so furiously angry! You'll not let him harm you, my Prince?"

"No, Eleanor," said he, laughing a little. "Why, no! What! harm the Prince of Novodnia? No; no harm shall come to the Prince of Novodnia, my dear. Be certain of that—— Go in now. You shall hear soon that all's well."

He bent over her hand and held it an instant to his cheek, kissed the long, slim fingers and the pink palm.

The Princess Eleanor caught the hand to her breast with a little, low cry. Her cheeks flamed suddenly.

"Au revoir, Carlo," she whispered. "Not good-bye; ah! not good-bye—— It's only till to-morrow. Au revoir, Carlo mio!" She moved back under the porch and through the door, but her eyes were upon him till the door closed.

Young Mallory gave his head a little jerk and pressed his hands a moment over his eyes; then he turned and went quietly down through the garden to the high studio wall.

The Prince of Novodnia stood in his place there, his brows lowering, his hands playing at the buttons of his jacket. I was in the window above, half concealed with the curtains.

"Well, sir?" said Denis Mallory, and came to a halt before the Prince.

Karl of Novodnia stared at him sullenly. His mouth worked under the fierce black moustache.

"It is not for me to judge you, sir," said the Irishman coldly, "but you show your affection and your care for your—for the Princess in strange ways. You may thank Heaven, or whom you please, that the Princess has been spared a shock that might well have been fatal. You know the reasons why I am here playing a part. You know why it is necessary, yet you attempt deliberately to wreck all our hopes and plans and efforts that are made in your behalf as well as hers."

"'Efforts in my behalf'!" sneered the Prince bitterly. "Aye, fine talk, Monsieur le Chevalier Bayard! fine talk, Monsieur the thief, Monsieur the sneak in another's home! You and your noble efforts! I tell you, monsieur!" he cried, shaking a clenched hand, "I tell you, you are sneaking behind your fine pretensions to steal the love of my wife, of the Princess Eleanor of Novodnia! I saw you, you blackguard! I saw her put her two hands upon your breast and look up into your face! Do you think I don't know a love look when I see it?

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You're plotting to steal my wife from me, you cur! you and the whole parcel of thieves here, among you! But there'll be one less, for I'll have your life, by the love of Heaven, here and now! Weapons, there! Weapons! Do you hear? Weapons, I say! Curse you, you beast! do you want me to kill you with my hands?"

Mallory smiled. The probability of his death at the naked hands of the raving little man before him seemed not alarming. Yet his eyes were set and hard, a bit narrowed. He was fond of calling himself ill names, of imputing to his motives a baseness that was far from their due, but he relished little this sort of thing from another.

He looked up to the window and met my eyes. He gave a little shrug of helplessness and shook his head.

"I'll not fight with you, sir," said he to the Prince. "You're needed elsewhere, I'm told. Your life mustn't be risked."

The Novodnian made as if he would spring upon him with empty hands.

"You cur! You cur!" he snarled furiously. "A coward, too, eh? Brave enough to sneak into a man's house and steal his wife, but too cowardly to face steel! You cur!"

"Teddy," said Denis Mallory quietly, his eyes steady and hard upon the other man's, "will you be good enough to throw me down a pair of sharpened foils?"

But I leaned from the window panic-stricken.

"For Heaven's sake, Denis!" I cried, "you mustn't, you mustn't! Think what you're doing, man! Oh, have a care!" Denis glanced up at me for an instant and smiled.

"It's all right, lad," said he. "Never fear! Come, the foils! and be quick!"

I took down the foils from the wall near at hand and tossed them to him. Both men had taken off jackets and waistcoats, and they took their blades and went to work in an instant, Denis quietly and wholly on the defensive, the Prince with a mad fury that made me fear for a moment lest he break down that matchless guard.

At the clash of the blades, Von Altdorf came running across the studio. He had been conferring with MacKenzie in a far corner, and had not seen me fetch the swords.

"What are they doing?" he cried, as he ran—"fighting, fighting? Creighton, why don't you stop them? Sir, sir!" He had one foot over the window-ledge when I hauled him back into the room.

"Hush, man!" I cried into his ear. "Hush, you'll put them out! Denis won't hurt the Prince, and the Prince can't hurt Denis. He *would* fight! He's mad with rage. He was all for tearing Denis with his empty hands. Be still; there'll be no harm done!"

It was one of the most beautiful exhibitions of swordsmanship that I have ever seen, Mallory's wonderful and impregnable defence against an attack which was a very whirlwind of fierceness and intensity. Aye, and a skilful whirlwind, too, not all random slashing. The Prince was a fine swordsman, and his rage gave him a strength and endurance far beyond his ordinary form.

But even this strength and endurance could not last for ever against such a blade. His thrusts grew weaker and his breathing more laboured, till he drew off a moment and stood bent and trembling, his point resting upon the ground, and his gaze fixed in baffled hatred upon the young Irishman.

It was at just this moment, while he stood waiting, tall, slender, strong, and ready, his head reared as we grew to know it so well in times of stress, point resting lightly upon the ground near his feet, left hand upon hip; it was at this moment that I saw—and I think Von Altdorf saw it, too—a strange look come upon Mallory's face, an uncertainty, a problem. It was as if he put himself a question and demanded its answer. Here was he in a quarrel not of his seeking, driven to it by insults the grossest possible, and facing the one man of all the world who stood in the way of what his heart craved. Here was a way out of his difficulties, everything made easy. The giving up of all that was dear to him in the world, that he had thought inevitable, need not be done. Here was a way easy and sure. He needn't even thrust. He needn't do the thing himself. A parry with the point held firm, not brought back en garde, and the man's own lunge must spit him—so easy as that—and Eleanor in the house beyond!

I think both Von Altdorf and I read his thoughts as though they were a printed page. I felt Von Altdorf's hand upon my shoulder. It trembled a little. Then the look passed from Mallory's face as swiftly as it had come. He gave his head a little shake and smiled once more. He even glanced up to the window, where the two of us leaned far out, watching with fascinated eyes, and gave us a humorous wink.

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"'You—you blackguard!' cried the man thickly."

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It was like Denis. Tragedy and comedy ran ever side by side in his nature, and he found fun in the darkest of dangers.

The Prince attacked once more, furiously, with a sort of desperate madness, as if he knew himself overmatched, but sought by the very storm of his onslaught to beat down that steel wall. But he met with another reception this time, for Denis, who had been content before merely to keep his body from hurt, now took the offensive and pressed the other into defence—pressed him till he broke ground, till he retreated step by step, and at last his left heel touched the wall. We who sat near, just over their heads, saw the perspiration break out upon the Prince's forehead and trickle down his nose and cheeks.

Then began the marvellous part of it, for Denis, quiet, cool, steady as a machine, began to break through the other's guard at will. His blade flashed too swiftly for sight to follow. To us above it had the appearance of being in a dozen places at once—a dozen glittering lines with the afternoon sun shining upon its length, as the spokes of a rapidly moving wheel seem blended to the eye in a fan of quivering light.

He made none of those silly and unnecessary motions, those stampings and outcries and wavings of the arm to which the Italians and even the French hold. He fought with the least movement possible, knees bent no more than need be, wrist free and swifter than lightning, eyes calm, steady, and fixed unwaveringly upon those of his opponent, never upon the blades.

I say he broke through the Prince's guard at will, touched him here and there, so lightly as not to scratch the skin, nor tear the garment, but always to be felt, always to make the man realise that he could run him through in an instant if he wished it. Breast, arm, shoulder, even cheek, he touched him, and the Prince, cursed with the little breath he had left, cursed and sobbed with rage, for now he knew that the man would not kill nor even wound him, unless, perchance, he was biding his time and meant to finish the game at his leisure. He knew that he was being played with, wearied out at the other's mercy, shamed before us all. Already his wrist burned as if with fire, and his arm near the shoulder ached till it was numb. His sword played still in a sort of mechanical desperation, but there was no cunning nor strength in it. Then, while his brain swam dizzily and the garden before his eyes wheeled and swung as in a fever, he heard Mr. Mallory say sharply, as if from a great distance—

"Come, sir, are you satisfied? Enough of this farce!" And suddenly the foil seemed to leap from his hand as by a strength of its own, leap high in the air over his head and wheel against the sky till it fell at a little distance, striking point downward in the black earth, and quivered there upright.

Then he dropped back helplessly against the wall, blind, aching, and crushed, and the tears coursed down his cheeks and dripped from his chin. He would have slipped to the ground but that Denis Mallory sprang forward, dropping his foil, and threw his long arms about him, lifting him in them as if he had been a child. When he wakened to consciousness, he was lying upon the big divan in the studio.

(*To be continued.*)

THE LAST PRAYER.

WE caught anear the flashing of the sword,
And knew that prayer weighed nothing with that Lord,
Who hath not spared or pardoned any man,
Since Time's great reckoning with Life began.
Yet to the silent feet of him who came
We clung and whispered our Beloved's name,
And futile, impotent, with sobbing breath,
Our last, poor plea, "Be gentle with him, Death."

THEODOSIA GARRISON.

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THE SOMÁLI CAMEL.

By H. F. PREVOST BATTERSBY.

SOMÁLILAND rests on the camel, as India on the elephant; rests, as it were, on the moving support of some five million humps, more than double the number that could be collected from the whole of Hindustan. A moving support it is, indeed, for in Somáliland there is nothing stable. No cities, no frontiers, no cultivated fields. The whole people is adrift upon its sands, as ships on the sea, following hither and thither the green skirts of the rain, and never, so long as these avail them, desiring a more abiding haven. Hence the part that the camel plays, since for so large a season of the year all Somáliland is on its back. Nor is the Somáli man indebted to his beast for transport only. He is often outside the camel in more senses than one, for above all foods he prefers its flesh, and he will never, if Fate favour, eat it in moderation. As he sits in those queer moods of his, crooning to himself apart at twilight, with his face tilted dreamily to the darkening sky, on his own achievements and the glories of the sorry creature which he calls a horse, he is certain to crown his account of their exploits with the feast of camel-flesh with which he would fain conclude it; and of all his uttered or muttered dreams of bliss, none surpasses the glutting of his whimsical appetite on stolen camel.

UNLOADING STORES FOR BERBERA.

But besides food and carriage, the camel supplies milk—and grateful, indeed, camels' milk can be—water in desperate need, a tent from his skin, glue from his hoof, a charm from his tooth, and various odds and ends in the way of trading from other parts of him. Camels' milk is the first civility offered to a stranger on arrival at a *karia*—the North African *kraal*—just as *kumiss*, an often most unwelcome attention, is pressed upon the traveller in every tent of the Kirghis. But camels' milk becomes frequently, in this land of extremes, a necessity of existence, and two men, as well as her foal, can be kept entirely by the milk of one camel. If more milk is required, a curious deception is practised, to which the very spasmodic intelligence of the animal lends itself. The foal is killed, and whenever milk is required, its skin is rubbed against the nostrils of the mother, who becomes at once amenable, and not only yields her milk, but will follow the bearer of the skin anywhere as meekly as a sheep.

"As a sheep" is, indeed, in Somáliland an unsuitable simile, for the black-headed, fat-tailed kind known to the country is by no means a meek beast, and, until in the rains he trails his tail—provocative as an Irishman's coat—one mass of flabby fat behind him, is as intractable as a gazelle.

In the absence of coinage, the milch-camel is regarded as the standard currency. All fines are exacted in milch-camels, and fines in the blustering life of a Somáli man are curious and frequent. Where no supreme authority exists, and no courts of justice, it would seem impossible to secure the infliction, much more the payment of a fine. But this is not so.

Born raider as the Somáli is, and always ready to risk the security of his household and possessions in order to pilfer those of his

neighbour, he is extraordinarily careful on his raiding forays to avoid the offence of human bloodshed whenever possible. When, however, murder has been committed, the tribe to which the murderer belongs has either to pay the exacted blood-money, give up the murderer, or fight.

The blood-money required for a man killed is one hundred milch-camels, and half the number for a woman. The difference does no credit to the Somáli man's gratitude, for his womankind not only offer, as in England, a certain satisfaction to the eye, but are extremely inexpensive and perform many useful offices. Indeed, always when her mankind are away raiding, and not infrequently when they are at home, the women have to undertake every labour in the camp and field, mat-making, wood-cutting, and herding and watering the cattle—no light work. The value of a woman, captured as loot, is sometimes acknowledged by a gift from her captor to the girl's father; but the husband is not always sufficiently impressed with his indebtedness thus to refer to it.

A SOMÁLI CAMEL-BOY.

Fines are not inflicted only for loss of life. Major Swayne states that the full blood-money is exacted for loss of sight or permanent disablement; fifty camels for the loss of an eye or of a limb, about thirty for blood drawn from the head, and even three or four for a bruise. But trifling claims of that sort are very often made from sheer love of gossip, as the Somáli enjoys nothing more than a subject that will breed interminable discussion, sittings in council, and delicate arbitration. He has largely developed the legal habit of mind. At present it supplies him with a pastime; but doubtless, when more advanced, he will learn to charge for it.

In colour, camels range from a dirty butter tint which is called white, through a brownish yellow to black. The white, which are generally preferred and fetch a higher price, find a market about Berbera, the dark at Zeila and higher up the coast. Light and dark, they are deceptive creatures, their appearance a very uncertain guide to their condition, and none at all to their character; and a man may spend a long time learning enough about a camel to be certain when buying one what he has bought.

A horse's ribs will show if he is starved, his coat when he is ailing, and his temper will slip out somewhere between ear and eye; but a camel will look half-starved when fit to be driven for his life—and yours; his hide will gleam as sleek as silk when he is rotten within from rib to rib; and his eye will take on dreamy mildness while his teeth ache to bite you.

That even a camel expert may be deceived by appearances was proved by an incident in the Sudan campaign of 1885. Much camel-dealing was then going forward, and many an officer of the Camel Corps became a camel-coper of no mean ability. One day a camel arrived in camp, with sumptuous trappings, the gift of a certain sheikh of Barabra to the brigadier. It was of a lovely tawny yellow, low in the hump, long in the barrel, glossy as a cat, without a tell-tale hollow or an ugly bone. It was slapped and poked by the whole camp, and pronounced the best, biggest, and fastest-looking beast that had come within its ken. But next morning proved that appearances—in this one case, at least—could not be relied on. The prodigy was slow, and perceptibly weary before half the day's march was done. Every effort to make it realise its own suggestions of ability failed, and there was no explanation of the mystery forthcoming, till one day a vet. in an idle moment pushed a probe into a slight sore in its side. As the instrument did not reach sound flesh, he fetched a longer one, and that also proving inadequate, contrived a bodkin which would have drilled a hippo. It slid so far into the camel that the surgeon looked for it on the other side, close to which, indeed, it came, thus explaining the painful riddle of the poor beast. A *post-mortem* showed that a rib had been broken off, and this, floating about in its inside, had induced decomposition, which had spread so far that it seemed a miracle that so sick a creature could move at all. Yet, but for that one small spot, there was no external symptom of disease—nothing, indeed, to indicate that the camel was not in

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A WATER-CART.

the finest fettle. This breaking off of a rib is by no means an uncommon accident with baggage animals, as a result of unskilful or rough loading, and the injury may go unnoticed for several hundred miles. And this, at least in Somáliland, from no brutal callousness on the part of their drivers, for the Somáli, though none too tender-hearted to his horse, whom he works on an unmerciful bit and rides to exhaustion, is never indifferent to his camel's needs. It is the beast itself which is to blame, which, with that desultory intelligence, never seems able to resolve its woes or refer its ills to their origin.

A WAGON CARRYING SICK ON THE MARCH

A vague sense of its own intellectual parentheses may be responsible for a camel's quite disproportionate protests whenever it thinks it is likely to be "put upon," for those aggrieved snortings at every load laid upon its back, which have absolutely no relation to the weight it may be asked to carry; since it makes just the same fuss, be the addition a case of ammunition or a feather bed. On the other hand, it pays no attention to really grievous injury, accepting pain as philosophically as if it had imagined it in the order of external things. It will thus endure what must be agonies without a murmur on the march, and never drop till at the point of death, and yet bellow like a spoilt child at its daily loading. A camel which Mr. Lort Phillips was transporting from Aden to Berbera for one of his expeditions sat for the four days' sea-journey on an overheated steam-pipe, which burnt slowly inches deep into its flesh, reducing one of its legs to such a horrible condition that the animal was of no further value; yet not a sound did it utter the whole time to hint that it was in the least uncomfortable.

Owing, perhaps, to the better treatment it receives, the Somáli camel compares favourably with those of Hindustan, being rarely either vicious or a skulker. The Somáli man whistles to his camels while they are being watered, and talks and sings to them when being loaded and unloaded. These camel-songs date from days of which the Somáli has but the vaguest tradition—from days, it may be, when caravans went from his walled cities, bearing tribute of stacte, onycha, galbanum, and amber to Egyptian palaces; or even from days older still, when the

A RED CROSS WAGON.

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priests of Egypt came into this mysterious land of Pûnt to be taught the strange rites and faiths and learning of its people.

For in these wastes of scrub and sand, where now the lion wanders and the hyæna howls, once were famous cities, which led at least one-quarter of the world along the highway of living, in art, science, and mystic thought. And of all its glory there remain only some bits of broken glass and potsherds, buried where durr grass and khansa have hidden the ruins of forgotten walls, and perhaps that dreamy sentiment which shows in the Somáli still when he croons to himself in the evening twilight.

The camel of the country is not that on which our Camel Corps is mounted, the native animal never having been taught to trot, being used almost exclusively as a beast of burden.

A CAMEL STABLE.

Assuch, carrying a load of between 250 and 300 lb. it can do, in the ordinary way of travel, something under, and, at a pinch, something over, three miles an hour; and, marching five hours from sun-up in the morning, and for four hours in the afternoon, will cover, without difficulty, twenty-four miles a day; though caravan stages are, as a rule, from fifteen to twenty. Not that even the camels of commerce should be considered as crawling, limp-legged creatures that never move out of a walk.

Full of new grass, and with no burden above them, they will frisk about like kids, cantering and kicking with an exuberance of vitality which makes their sedate shapes look as incongruously humorous as some fat old *vrouw* dancing a breakdown. Their cantering, cumberous as it looks, is not to be despised in the way of speed, for even the fleet Somáli can only keep up with them for a very short time, and beyond his sprinting distance only the camel is in the race.

The trotting camel is imported from Arabia, his requirements making him, save for short expeditions, of little value in a country which produces no grain and possesses little water, both of which the trotter needs.

The Somáli camel, on the contrary, can eat everything and drinks nothing. It will make a meal where even the country pony would starve. Darémo, mimosa, acacia—all come alike to it; and when shoots and leaves are withered, it can fall back on roots, thorns, and bark. That sort of digestion makes it, of course, valuable in a country where the bill of fare seems compiled in the interest of the carnivora, but its indifference to liquid is its especial virtue. While the Arab camel needs drink daily, his Somáli brethren, when on the march, are only watered every fifth day, and, when drought prevails, may be left for ten. When grazing, they are supposed to be watered every sixth day, but such regularity depends on the energy of the herders and the condition of the grass, the herds, when the grass is green, being often left without water for as long as three months.

Nor is it the camel only that succeeds in adapting himself to circumstances. Sheep and goats share his pastures, and find in the herbage all the drink they need—or, at any rate, all they get for a full quarter of the year. Even in the dry season they are seldom watered more than once a week.

The camels alone in these herds may amount to as many as thirty thousand, a

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number which involves wide areas for grazing, and consequent distances from the few places where water may be found. The ponies used by the Somáli can also manage without drink for three or four days, and when employed for herding, have, like their masters, only camels' milk to quench their thirst.

These big herds offer, of course, a tremendous temptation to the raider, as many as ten thousand camels being taken at a time; and the excitement of driving off such a haul at full gallop for some forty or fifty miles, with the exasperated owner possibly hard in pursuit, and the chances of the raider finding his own camp has fallen a prey to some other tribal diversion, appeals irresistibly to the excitable Somáli, fond as

A LOAD OF FORAGE.

A BEAST OF BURDEN.

he is of any sort of a gamble, and especially of a gamble in life.

And really such a life is not unattractive to adventurous and poetic spirits, as in a fashion the Somális are. To the adventuresome stockbroker there must be some breathless moments; but conceive how their palpitation might be increased if he never knew as he ambled to the morning train whether he would return not only with a vastly increased fortune, but with newer beauties to grace the domestic hearth from which it was by no means unlikely he should find that his previous establishment had disappeared in the arms of some other gay marauder. One speaks with respect of settled conditions, but there must be a certain charm—though, of course, only to the savage breast—in such bewildering uncertainty.

It must be mentioned, however, in defence of the Somáli man's virtue—and discretion—that the raiding of married women is frowned upon by the tribe, entailing as it does a heavy fine, if not more serious complications. So the Somáli, as a rule, confines his attentions to the maidens of the captured *karia*, and the girl may be generally trusted to justify his choice by a good-humoured acceptance of the situation. Where the rules of the game are thus observed, the tribes wisely do not condemn the practice, recognising the advantages of new blood, and seeing in its possibilities a distinct

"TROTTERS."

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addition to the gaiety of housekeeping; though housekeeping may seem too ornate a word for the conduct of those ever-shifting *gurgis* of mats and skins.

To a woman the Somáli, despite his fondness for the camel, leaves for the most part the care of it. She loads and unloads it on the march, acquiring thereby a wonderful muscular development, her lord and master meanwhile encouraging the operation by throwing in a song to keep the beast amused; she herds it during a halt, plaits from bark the heavy *háns* in which water for the camp is carried, and from grass or fibre the water-bottles which the men wear, weaves from chewed bark the mats which save the camels' backs from chafing, and makes ropes to bind their loads from the beaten fibre of the aloe. Women are equal to keeping up with a caravan, however great the distance and however good the pace, tramping the four hundred miles from the Webbe Shebéleh river to Berbera in sixteen days, a trail by no means easy, crossing several mountain ranges and the desert of the Hand. Twenty-five miles a day is very good going on foot through scrub, over loose stones and sand, with all the labour of camping, watering, and loading on one's hands as well; and the Somáli man has reason for looking on his womankind as a useful asset. Not that he does very obviously so regard her. The romantic appreciation which renders him such an indifferent soldier does not seem to increase appreciably his charm as a mate.

To the women falls also the doctoring of the camels, and the camel is not the hardy beast he has the air of being. He has many enemies—gadflies, ticks, leeches, maggots, and thorns. Camels are tied head to tail on the march, to keep them from straying and dawdling; but the remedy puts their tail to a use which reduces considerably its efficacy as a scourge for flies, even should the unevenness of the road not deprive its owner in a jolting moment of its services altogether; for it is no unusual event for a camel to complete his stage with a tail at either end of him, and the beast in front of him with only a tail at his head.

A camel's tail is a poor enough weapon against the Ogádén gadfly, but the camel gets some fun from whisking it, and doubtless he feels lonelier when it is gone. The ticks, which fasten to his eyelids and swell to the size of date-stones, also have him at a disadvantage, for, tied as he is to the tail of the beast in front of him, he cannot lower his head sufficiently to rub his eyes between his knees.

The leeches he imbibes when drinking—for there is but little water in the country which does not boast a considerable fauna—fix themselves to the root of his tongue, until he has, when they are gorged with blood, some difficulty in swallowing.

To these trials Major Swayne adds sore back, from the chafing of a load. The sore is generally in front of the hump. The camel, when let out to browse, bites it; and a fly, which has an evident interest in such sores, deposits live maggots in it. The maggots, which crawl about from the moment they leave the body of the fly, attract the attention of the rhinoceros-bird, which plunges its sharp red beak into the sore, and devours indifferently the maggots and the festered and sound flesh. Often as many as a dozen of these birds may be seen clinging flat to a camel's shoulders, uttering their long, shrill, discordant cry.

However, in spite of such deterrents, the five million camels of Somáliland prove that camel life in the Horn has doubtless its compensations, for camels are not prolific creatures, and are only troubled with the cares of maternity for a single offspring every second year. Doubtless the present war will make a considerable addition to the wastage, and the track of our columns be marked, as they were across the veld, by the whitening bones of beasts. But with the reserve the country has to draw upon, the only visible evidence of anything having happened will probably have to be sought for in the pockets of the astute Somáli.

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A NEW YEAR'S GREETING.

By Alfred Weatherstone.

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THE CAREER OF JOAN CARTHEW:

THE ADVENTURES OF A GIRL WHO HAD NOTHING AND WANTED EVERYTHING.

By Mrs. C. N. WILLIAMSON.*

No. II.—THE STEAM-YACHT "TITANIA."

GEORGE GALLON had lately left a well-known firm of stockbrokers, in which he had been junior partner, and set up business on his own account. He had started at a trying time, during the Boer war, when the financial world was in a state of depression; but he had brought off two or three *coups* for his clients and himself, and though he was unpopular, he had begun to be talked of among a limited circle in the City as a man who would succeed.

Joan Carthew had heard "George's luck" discussed by guests at Lady Thorndyke's, when she had been at home from school on her holidays; therefore it was that she had so promptly accepted the offer thrown to her in derision, as a bone is flung to a chained dog. "If I keep my eyes and ears open, I shall get tips," was the thought that flashed into her head.

If Joan had been an ordinary eighteen-year-old girl, she would have faltered before the difficulty of turning such "tips" to her own advantage, on a salary of two pounds a week; but she would not have entered George Gallon's service if she had been one to falter before difficulties; and three days after the reading of the will which left the girl a pensioner on her own wits, she presented herself at the office in Copthall Court.

It was early, and Gallon had not yet arrived. However, his curiosity to see whether Joan would really keep her engagement brought him to the City half an hour earlier than usual. When he came in, there sat at an inner office, at the desk used by his late stenographer, a young woman plainly dressed in black, though not in mourning deep enough to depress the spirits of the beholder.

It was Joan Carthew. She had already taken off her hat and hung it on a peg. Gallon noticed instantly that her beautiful golden-brown hair was dressed more simply than he had seen it. Every detail of her costume was suited to the new part she was about to play—that of the business woman.

"Good morning, Mr. Gallon," she said crisply. "Your head clerk told me this would be my desk. I have brought my own typewriter. I hope you don't mind. You know, from the test you made the other day, that I take down quickly from dictation, and that my typing is clear. I am ready to begin work whenever you are."

"Glad to find you so businesslike," said Gallon, uncomfortable in spite of himself, though there was a keen relish in the situation.

"You will, I hope, never find me anything else," quietly replied Joan.

So the new *régime* began. At first, for some days, the man was ill at ease, could not collect his thoughts for dictation, and stammered in his speech. He regretted that his desire to humiliate the girl had tempted him to offer this position; but Joan's attitude was so tactful, so unobtrusive, that little by little he forgot his awkwardness and even the meanness of his motive in making her his dependent. He almost forgot that he had ever asked her to marry him; and because he found her astonishingly clever and useful, he waived the idea of further insults which had flitted through his head when first the dethroned heiress became his secretary.

One autumn morning, Gallon was late. Joan sat waiting in his office, and had opened such correspondence as was not marked "Private," had typed several letters ready for her employer's signature, and having no more business which could be transacted until he appeared, began to glance through an illustrated Society weekly which she took in. This paper she always read with eagerness; not because she had the morbid interest of an outsider in the doings

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of Society, with a capital S, but because any information she could glean about important people might be of service in the career to which she undauntedly looked forward.

On one page of this particular paper, country houses, electric-launches, libraries, motor-cars, and even family jewels were advertised; and it was an absorbing page to Joan. To-day she gazed long at the reproduction of a handsome steam-yacht, which for some weeks past had been advertised for sale, for the sum of twelve thousand pounds. Only a few months ago, she had been planning to have some day a yacht of her own. It had been one of the many pleasant things she had meant to do with Lady Thorndyke's money.

"A moment later Joan was in the chair."

"I shouldn't mind owning the *Titania*, if she's as good as her photograph," the girl was thinking, when George Gallon and a fat, foreign-looking man came in.

"You can go back into the next room, Miss Carthew," said George abruptly. "I shall not need you at present, and you may tell them outside that I am not to be disturbed."

Joan rose and walked into the outer office, where the three clerks, who were all more or less in love with the beautiful secretary, glanced up joyfully from their work at sight of her. The youngest, whose desk was close to the door, had already proposed. He was a dreamy youth with a fluffy brain, but his father was a rich man, known in the City as "the Salmon King," and cherished hopes that one day his son would cut a figure on the Stock Exchange. These family details the young man had confided to Joan as a lure to matrimony, and though she had answered that he was a "foolish boy," and nothing was farther from her intention than to settle down as Mrs. Tommy Mellis, she had not in so many words refused the honour.

Now she whispered a request that, if he had still a regard for her, he would slip out and buy a box of chocolates, for the need of which she was perishing. A moment later Tommy was out of his chair, and Joan was in it. His was the one seat in the room where conversation in Gallon's private office could by any means be overheard; and Gallon was aware that whatever might go in at Tommy's right ear promptly went out at the left, without leaving the smallest impression of its meaning.

"Is the deal certain to come off?" she heard George inquire.

"Sure as the sun is to rise to-morrow," replied another voice with a foreign accent. "You are the only outsider in the know. That's worth something, isn't it?"

"It's worth what I've promised for it."

"At least that. And I want an advance to-day."

"In such a hurry? I shan't make any-

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thing, or be sure you haven't fooled me, for weeks. Still, I can manage a hundred."

"I need ten times that."

"You'll have it the day the Clerios are taken over."

"'Sh! not so loud! And no names, for Heaven's sake, man!"

"Oh, that's all right. The clerk near the door is a fool. The only one out there with any real brains is a girl, but she doesn't know the difference between Clerios and clerics. That's why I employ a woman for a secretary. She spends her spare energy on the fashions, and doesn't bother about things which are none of her business."

In spite of this protest, Gallon dropped his voice. Only a word here and there started out of the broken murmurs on the other side of the door; but one more sentence, almost whole, came to her ears. "Grierson Mordaunt . . . sort of chap . . . carries these things through." Then reappeared Tommy with the chocolates, and Joan went to her own desk; but the stray bits of information were as flint and steel in her brain, and together they struck out a spark of inspiration. She was as sure as if she had heard all details of the transaction that the World's Shipping Combine, of which the American millionaire, Grierson Mordaunt, stood at the head, had arranged to take over the Clerio line of Italian boats plying between Mediterranean ports. The fat man with the foreign accent was no doubt the confidential agent of the Italian company, and being acquainted with George Gallon and his methods, had given the secret away for a consideration. Doubtless he was poor, perhaps in difficulties; otherwise he would have kept the information and bought all the Clerio shares he could lay his hands upon.

Now Joan knew why Gallon had written yesterday to a man in Manchester, asking him how many Clerios he had to sell, and what was the lowest price he was prepared to take for them, adding that it would be useless, in the present depressed state of the market, to name a high figure. This man had been requested to wire his answer, and at any moment it might arrive.

When Joan had jumped so far in her conclusions, Gallon escorted his visitor out, flinging back word that he would be in again in half an hour.

The girl's blood sang in her ears. It seemed to her that Fortune was knocking at the door; but could she find the key to open it? She called all her wits to the rescue, and in five minutes that key was grating in the lock.

In Gallon's private room was a small desk, which she used when her services were wanted there. This gave her an excuse to go in, and, in passing, she threw a glance at Tommy Mellis, which caused him, after the lapse of a decent interval (he counted eighty seconds), to follow.

"Once you said you would do anything for me," she began, with a lovely look. "Did you mean it?"

"Rather!"

"Well, then, the next question is: Will your father do anything for *you?*"

"He'll do a good deal."

"If you tell him you've a tip about some shares that are bound to rise, will he give you the money to buy them?"

"He'd lend it. That's his way. He'd be tickled to see me taking an interest in business. But what has that got to do with——"

"I want to buy some shares—lots of shares—all I can get hold of. To-day they're going cheap. To-morrow, who can say? They are Clerios."

"But, look here, even I know that Clerios are no good. It's a badly managed line, and the shares are down to next to nothing."

"All the better. Mr. Gallon mustn't know you are in this, as he wants to get hold of all the shares himself. You must trust me enough to have them put into my name, and when I've got your profit for you, *we'll* go halves. Can you see your father inside half an hour?"

"His place is just round the corner."

"Well, then, if you *do* care anything for me, ask him to see you through a big deal. You shall really make on it, I promise you, besides my—gratitude."

"The governor's a queer fish. If I should let him in——"

"You won't let him in. But we don't want your father or anybody else in with us. All we want is the loan, and his name, which is a good one in the City, I know. I trust you for that. You must show how clever you are, if you are anxious to please me. I'll manage the rest. Now, like a dear, good boy, run out and arrange things with your father."

Again Tommy became knight-errant, and hardly was he out of the way when a strange voice was heard in the adjoining office. "Mr. Gallon in? I'm Mr. Mitchison, from Manchester."

"Mr. Gallon is out at present, but——" a

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"Looking as if her home should be Park Lane, she went to the office."

clerk had begun, when Joan appeared and cut him short. "Mr. Gallon wishes me to see Mr. Mitchison, in his absence. Will you kindly step in here, sir?"

The gentleman from Manchester obeyed. Joan's quick eyes noted his worried air and the genteel shabbiness of his clothing. "I am Mr Gallon's confidential secretary," she said. "I know about this business of Clerios. You came instead of wiring? Mr. Gallon rather expected you would."

"I had to come to London in a day or two, anyhow, and it's always more satisfactory to do business in person."

"Exactly. Well, I'm sorry to tell you that Mr. Gallon has seen reason to change his mind about buying your block of shares in the Clerio line, as he has some big things on now, and finds his hands full; but Mr. Mellis, a client of his 'the Saloon King,' you

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know—wants to invest some money privately for his son. Mr. Gallon has advised them that, though Clerios are not likely to rise much for some years, there is a certain, if small dividend; and if you can tell young Mr. Mellis where they can get hold of other blocks of the same shares, it might then be worth his while to take over yours. Those you hold are hardly enough for him without others."

"I know several men in Genoa, where I did business for some years, who hold shares and would part with them for a decent price. I could work the deal for Mr. Mellis, I'm certain."

"Good. He's at his father's office now. I have Mr. Gallon's permission to introduce you to him, but his only free time this morning is in the next half-hour. I can go with you to Mr. Mellis senior's office, if you're inclined to settle matters at once."

"The Salmon King," who had earned his title by building up the largest "canned goods" business of its kind in England, had offices on the ground floor of an imposing building not far away, and Joan was lucky enough to guide her companion to the door without the dreaded misfortune of meeting George Gallon on the way. As they crossed the threshold, Tommy Mellis issued from a room with a ground-glass door. Joan hurried to him, asked if his father had been kind, was assured that all was well so far, and hastened to explain the new development of affairs so clearly that even Tommy's slow intelligence grasped her meaning without difficulty. "When I've introduced you to Mr. Mitchison, offer him twenty pounds a share (their nominal value is fifty) and if necessary go up to twenty-five. Tell him he shall have a commission on all the other shares he can get, if the whole thing can be fixed up by wire to-morrow. Say there is a man coming to see you the day after about some other investment, which your father prefers, but you've taken a fancy to this, and want everything settled before the two older men come together. As Gallon must do all his business in Clerios privately, and doesn't want to ask for them in the House, that will give us time to work."

"By Jove! this will mean a lot of money," faltered Tommy. "Of course, I'm delighted to do this for you, but if the governor——"

Joan soothed his fears; and introduced Mitchison to young Mellis, who took them both into a small, empty office. She hovered about during the business conversation which ensued, putting in a word here and there, and impressing the Manchester man with her shrewdness. In his opinion, George Gallon had a treasure for a secretary, and he was grateful to her for pushing on his affairs so well, especially as he did not believe he could have got from Gallon the price which Mellis was willing to give.

When Joan returned to the office in Copthall Court, her employer had not yet come back. "Don't tell Mr. Gallon I've been out, will you?" she appealed to the clerks, her slaves. As she spoke, the door opened, and Gallon entered, just in time to hear the ingenuous request. The young men flushed in consternation for her, but the girl did not change colour. As a matter of fact, she had known that George was coming up, and had probably seen her on the stairs. She had not spoken without design.

Having been delayed vexatiously, Gallon was not in a good mood, and his black ones were not pleasant for underlings. A frowning look and a gesture of the head called Joan to his private office. She followed meekly; but when the scolding had reached the stage which she mentally designated as "ripe," her meekness vanished like snow in sunshine.

"How dare you speak to me like that!" she exclaimed, her eyes blazing. "I'm not your servant, though I have served you well. I leave to-day."

"This moment, if you choose," George flung back at her furiously, though in reality he had not intended matters to touch this climax. Joan had become valuable, but, as he said to himself in his sullen anger, she was the "last person in the world whose impudence he would stand."

When Joan had gathered up her few belongings, and remarked that she would send for her typewriter, she added: "Mr. Mitchison, of Manchester, called, and wanted me to tell you that he'd already parted with the shares you wired about last night. I asked who had bought them, but he was pledged to secrecy. I believe that is all I need say, except that you will find all your correspondence in good order, to be taken over by my successor; and as you have declared so often that good stenographers are starving for want of employment, you will not be long in obtaining one."

With this she was off, and, hailing the first cab she saw (though in her circumstances a cab was an extravagance), drove to Woburn Place, where she lived in a back bedroom on the top floor of a cheap boarding-house.

She remained only long enough, however,

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to change into one of the pretty dresses left from last spring's wardrobe. Looking as if her home should be Park Lane instead of Bloomsbury, she went to the office of the illustrated weekly in which she had been interested that morning. When she inquired the address of *Titania's* owner, she was told that all business connected with the yacht would be done at the advertising bureau of the paper. This was a blow, for the proposal that Joan had to make was not, perhaps, of a kind suited to the taste of a mere commonplace agent. She thought for a moment, and then said, with a slight accent which she had learned through mimicking a girl at school: "Well, I'm very sorry, but I'm afraid we can't do business, then. I'm an American girl; my name is Mordaunt. Grierson Mordaunt is my uncle. I guess you've heard of him. I want to buy a yacht, in a hurry—my people generally are in a hurry—and I thought this one might do. But if I can't see the owner myself, it's no use. *Good* morning."

Before she had got half-way to the door the dapper manager of the advertising bureau stopped her. Possibly an exception might be made in her favour; he would write to his client.

"Can you send the letter by district messenger?" asked the newly fledged Miss Mordaunt shrewdly.

The manager admitted that this could be done. To what hotel should he transmit the answer? "I'm staying with friends, and I don't want them to know about this till it's settled," said Joan. "I tell you what I'll do: I'll wait here."

She did wait, for three-quarters of an hour; and at the end of that time the manager received a reply to his letter. In consequence, he told Joan that Lady John Bevan would see her at Kensington Park Mansions.

As soon as the girl heard the name of Lady John Bevan, she knew why the yacht was for sale, and was hopeful that the eccentric proposition she meant to make might be received with favour. Lord John Bevan was in prison, for the crime of forgery, committed after losing a fortune at Monte Carlo.

Joan took another cab to Kensington Park Mansions—a mean shelter for a woman whose environment had once been brilliant. But Lady John, a tall and peculiarly elegant woman, shone out like a jewel in an unworthy setting. The two women looked at each other with admiration, and there was eagerness in the elder's voice as she said: "You want to buy the *Titania*, Miss Mordaunt?"

"I'm not sure yet, till I've tried, to see how I like her," replied Joan. "That's fair, isn't it? What I want, if I see the yacht and like her, and we can come to terms, is to hire the *Titania* for a couple of months. Then, at the end of that time, if I don't buy her myself, I'll sell her for you to somebody else; that's a promise. What would you want for your yacht for a couple of months, all in working order, and the captain and crew's money included?"

"Five hundred pounds," returned Lady John. "You can see her at Cowes."

"Well, I don't mind telling you that's more than I expected. I'm G. B. Mordaunt's niece, and some day I suppose I shall be one of the richest women in America, but my money's tied up till I'm twenty-five. I've only an allowance, and Uncle Grierson, who is my guardian, is hard as nails. I'll tell you what I can do, though. I have some shares which are worth a lot of money, but I don't want to deal with them myself, as their value is a secret, and my uncle would be mad with me if he knew I was using it. What I was going to say is this. The shares I speak of are worth mighty little to those who aren't 'in the know,' and a lot to those who are. If you'll call to-morrow morning at ten o'clock on a stockbroker in the City, whose address I'll give you, and tell him you've a block of Clerios to dispose of, he'll jump at the offer. All you must do is to stand firm, and you can get eight hundred pounds out of him. If he says they're no good, just let your eyes twinkle and tell him G. B. Mordaunt's niece has been talking to you. That will settle Mr. George Gallon! Keep your five hundred for the yacht, and give the three hundred change to me. Of course, this is provided I like the yacht. You give me an order to see her at Cowes. I'll start at once, wire you what I think of her, and, if it's all right, I'll call here first thing in the morning with the share certificates."

Carried away by the girl's magnetism and dash, Lady John Bevan would have said "Yes" to almost anything. She said "Yes" now with a promptness which surprised herself when she thought of it afterwards, by the cold light of reason.

Joan arrived at Cowes before dark, and was delighted with the *Titania* and her crew. She wired her approval to Lady John, and telegraphed Tommy Mellis, asking him to

"On fine days tea was always served on deck."

meet her at Waterloo for the eleven o'clock train from Southampton, bringing the share certificates which had that morning been Mitchison's. She was sure that Tommy would not fail, and he did not. They had supper together in the grill-room of the Carlton, as Joan was not in evening dress; she told him all she chose to tell, and no more; and thus ended the busiest day of Joan Carthew's life.

The transaction in which Lady John Bevan was to act as catspaw came off next morning as the girl had expected, and she would have given something handsome if she could have seen George Gallon's face when he found himself obliged to pay for the very shares he had expected to obtain yesterday, four times what he had intended to offer Mitchison. His profit would now be small, when the great *coup* came off; still,

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he could not afford to refuse the chance, and Joan knew it. Some day, she meant that he should also know to whom he owed his defeat; but that day was not yet.

For the shares sold by Mitchison he had received two hundred pounds. A like sum Joan agreed to place in Tommy's hands, as part profit of the transaction; and when Lady John Bevan was paid for the two months' hire of the *Titania*, the girl would have a hundred pounds over, to "play with," as she expressed it to herself. The other shares which Mitchison was pledged to obtain from Genoa would be available within the next few days, and Joan had made up her mind what to do with them, by and by. She had had several inspirations since overhearing snatches of conversation between her employer and his Italian visitor yesterday morning, and one of these inspirations concerned Lady John Bevan.

Lady John was pitied by the old friends in the old life from which poverty and misfortune had removed her. People would have been glad to be "nice" to her in any cheap way which did not cost too much money or trouble, if she had let them. But the woman was a proud woman, who still loved her husband in spite of his guilt, and she had not cared to go out of her hired flat in Kensington to be patronised by the world which had once flattered and fought for her invitations. Joan guessed as much of this as she did not know, and when Lady John wished her, rather wistfully, a "pleasant cruise," the girl said suddenly: "Come with me and be my chaperon! My aunt Caroline, Uncle Grierson Mordaunt's sister, came to England with me; but she hates the sea, and flatly refuses to do any yachting. I'm not sorry, because she's a prim old dear, and what I want is to see a little life and fun. I've been kept very close till now, and though I'm of age, I'm only just out, so I don't know many people, and you would be sure to meet lots of nice friends of yours, to whom you'd introduce me. It's so foggy and horrid here now; I'm going to make straight for the Riviera with the *Titania*, and it will do you good. Please come."

Lady John could not resist the prospect, or that "Please," spoken cooingly, with lovely, pleading eyes and a childlike touch on her arm. Besides, she loved the *Titania*, and before she quite knew what she was doing, she had promised to chaperon Grierson Mordaunt's niece.

Considering the way in which she was handicapped by false pretences and shortness of cash, Joan could not have done better for herself. She told Lady John that she had had a disagreement with the friends with whom she had been staying, and wished to be recommended to a hotel for the few days before they could get off on the *Titania*. Of course, Lady John invited her to the flat, and the girl accepted. She asked her new chaperon's advice about dressmakers and milliners for the Riviera outfit, which must be got together in a hurry. Lady John had paid all her own bills after the crash, with money grudgingly supplied by relations, and was in the "good books" of the tradespeople she had once lavishly patronised. Introduced by her as a niece of the well-known American millionaire, Joan had unlimited credit to procure unlimited pretty things. Everything had to be bought ready made, and at the end of the week, the steam-yacht *Titania*, with "Miss Jenny Mordaunt" and Lady John Bevan on board, was bounding gaily over the bright waters of the Bay. A few days later, the *Titania* made one of a colony of other yachts lying snugly in Nice harbour.

Now, Joan's wisdom in the choice of a chaperon justified itself even more pointedly than when it had been a question of a pilot among shoals of tradespeople. Lady John believed in her young charge, whose statements concerning her engaging self it had never occurred to the elder woman to doubt. Having undertaken the duties of a chaperon, she was conscientious in carrying them out, and lost no time in picking up old friendships which might be valuable to Miss Mordaunt—just how valuable, or in what way, Lady John little dreamed.

Not only did she know a number of rich and titled English folk, who had come out to spend the cold months at their villas, or in fashionable hotels, at Nice, Monte Carlo, and Mentone, but she could claim acquaintance with various foreign royalties and personages of high degree. These latter especially were delighted to meet the beautiful American girl, who was so rich and independent that she travelled about the world on her own yacht. It was nobody's business that the *Titania* was but hired for two months, since it was Miss Mordaunt's pleasure to pose as the owner. The name of the yacht had been changed, for politic reasons, since gay Lord John had careered about the waterways of the world in her; she had been newly decorated, and the colour of her paint had undergone a change, therefore she could pass unrecognised by all save experts. Joan and

her chaperon kept "open house" on board. The luncheon-table was always laid for twelve, in case anyone strolled on in the morning whom it would be agreeable to detain. On fine days—and what days were not fine on these shores beloved of the sun?—tea was always served on deck under the rose-and-white awning; and Russian princes, Austrian barons and baronesses, French counts and countesses, with a sprinkling of the English nobility, came early and stayed late to drink the Orange Pekoe and eat the exquisite little cakes provided by the confiding tradespeople of Nice. Joan paid for nothing, and got everything. Was she not a great American heiress, and was not the yacht alone a guarantee of her trustworthiness?

Not even the owners of famous American yachts lying alongside suspected the girl to be other than she seemed, though they were of the world in which Grierson Mordaunt was prominent. He was not a man who made intimate friends, and none of those who knew him best had any reason to doubt that he had a pretty niece named Jenny. As for Mordaunt himself, Joan kept posted as to his whereabouts. She read the papers and followed his movements in Florida; therefore she felt safe and pursued her business calmly.

For it was business more than pleasure which had brought the girl on this adventure, though she knew how to combine the two. Her hospitality, her breakfasts, her tea and cakes, her lavish dinners, were not supplied to her guests for nothing, though they were not aware that they were paying save by the honour of their presence. When Joan had established friendly relations with a person worth cultivating (she abjured all others), her next step was to drop a careless word about a wonderful "tip" she had got from Grierson Mordaunt. "It's all in the family," she would say, laughing, "or he would never have given it away; and, of course, I mustn't. He just said to me: 'Buy up a certain thing while you can get it,' and I did. My goodness! I've got more than I know what to do with, for, after all, I had more money than I wanted before. By and by I shall be *too* rich. Mercy! I'm afraid now of being married for my money."

Then the hearers, dazzled by the fairy story, wondered whether they might possibly ask Miss Mordaunt if they could profit by the marvellous "tip," and pick up a few crumbs from her overflowing table. If Joan had hawked her wares, no doubt these people would have fought shy; but as the object was difficult of attainment and must be manœuvred for, according to the way of the world they struggled for it with eagerness. As soon as Joan could decently appear to understand, in her innocence, what her dear friends were driving at, she was so "good-natured" that she volunteered to sell them a few of her own shares. The only promise she exacted in return was that nobody would boast of the favour granted. The shares which she had bought at a low price—not yet paid—she sold for three times their face value, sent half the profit to Tommy Mellis as she got it in, and pocketed her own half. She was thus able to pay the tradespeople who had trusted her, and to lay in coal for the trips round the coast which the *Titania* often took with a few distinguished passengers.

The girl could have sung for joy over the success of her adventure. In the end she would cheat nobody; she would make a decent sum for herself, and meanwhile she was drinking the intoxicating nectar of excitement. She was so happy that when she had finished her business, sold all her shares, and the two months for which the *Titania* was hired were drawing to an end, she longed to stay on. She was her own mistress, and could pay her way now—at least, for awhile, until she had another stroke of luck, which her confidence in herself enabled her to count upon as certain. She and Lady John were having a "good time," everybody liked them, and she did not see why this good time should not go on indefinitely. Besides, she had promised to sell the yacht for its owner. The two ladies of the *Titania* had invitations for a month ahead, and one evening were dressed and waiting for the arrival of an English bishop, a Roman prince, two American trust magnates, and a French duchess and her daughter, when the name of Mr. Grierson Mordaunt was announced!

Joan's blood rushed to her head, but she stood up smiling. "Leave us for a minute, dear," she breathed to Lady John, who slipped off to her cabin unsuspectingly. The girl found herself facing a grizzled, smooth-shaven man with a prominent chin, a large nose, and eyes of iron grey which matched his hair and faded skin.

"So you are the young woman who has been trading on a supposed relationship to me?" remarked Grierson Mordaunt, looking her up and down from head to foot.

"We are related—through Adam," replied Joan, whose lips were dry. "As for 'trading'

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"'So you are the young woman who has been trading on a supposed relationship to me?'"

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on the relationship, I'm proud of it, and I don't see why you should be ashamed of me. I've done nothing to disgrace you."

"What is your game, that you should have selected my particular branch of the Adam family?"

"Because I have one of your family secrets. If you are going to disown me, there's no reason why I shouldn't give it away."

"What are you talking about?"

"Clerios. You aren't ready for the secret of that deal to come out yet, are you? I saw in the paper the other day that you had denied any intention of taking the Clerio line into your combine. It was the same paper that said you had just returned to New York from Florida."

"You are an adventuress, my young friend."

"Every seeker of fortune is an adventurer or an adventuress. The crime is, failure. I am not a criminal, because I am succeeding, and my success has enabled me to meet my obligations. If you don't think that I was justified in claiming relationship with you through so remote an ancestor in common as Adam, you can make the rest of my stay here very uncomfortable, I admit; and if you have no fellow-feeling for a beginner, I suppose you will do it."

"How long do you intend your stay to be?" inquired Mordaunt grimly, but with a twinkle in his eye.

"How long do you want it kept dark about Clerios?"

"A fortnight."

"Then I should like very much, if you don't mind, to stop here a fortnight."

The grizzled man laughed. "You've the pluck of—the Evil One!" he ejaculated. "I was in Paris, and read about one of my niece's smart dinner-parties, so I came on—especially to see you. Now——"

"Now you are here, won't you stop to one of the dinner-parties? Some very nice people are coming this evening."

"And play the part of fond uncle? No, I thank you. But, by Jove! I'll go away without unmasking you. You may bless your pretty face and your smart tongue for that——"

"And the family secret."

"That's part of it, but not all. I give you a fortnight's grace. Mind, not a day more; and respect the character you've stolen meanwhile, or the promise doesn't stand. This day fortnight you clear out, and Miss Jenny Mordaunt must never be heard of again."

"It's a bargain," said Joan. "By some other name I shall be as great."

"So long as it's not mine. Have you done well with Clerios?"

"Pretty well, thank you. I was a little hampered for lack of capital. I might get you a few shares here in Nice, if you like; not cheap exactly—still, a good deal lower than they will be a fortnight from now."

"Much obliged. You needn't trouble yourself. But I shall keep my eye on you."

"I shall consider it a compliment," said Joan, "and try to be worthy of it."

"Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

When he was gone, Joan sank into a chair and closed her eyes. It would have been a comfort to faint, but the first guest arrived at that moment, and she rose to the occasion. The dinner was a great success, and everyone was grieved to hear that the *Titania* was due to steam away—for a destination unmentioned—in a fortnight.

REQUIEM.

YOU, with your passionate heart,
Dead—and to be but dust!
I, with life's pitiful smart,
Living because I must!

You, with the smile on your face
Mystically grand;
Wondering I at its grace,
Tortured to understand.

I, kneeling here by your bed,
Know you but sleep;
Yes, and they tell me you're dead—
You, with my heart in keep!

World, if you know what is right,
Take me in his stead!
Bury me out of your sight,—
I am the one that's dead!

MAY MYRTLE FRENCH.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

WHEN TO APPRECIATE.

PERKINS: Aren't you sick of hearing everybody bawling that awful song that's the rage just now?
JENKINS: Not at all.
PERKINS: Heavens! How can you stand it?
JENKINS: Well, you see, I wrote it.

THE DOG-STROKER.

THE fact that I have missed him lately reminds me of our first meeting. I was able to render him a trifling service by bandaging his hand. It was an ugly wound, and the fingers were bitten to the bone. After I had set him to rights—I had taken him to my room—he sank back into a chair with a sigh of relief. "I am prevented," he said regretfully, "by the present unfertility of my work from even offering to defray my obligation." He mentioned his work with such obvious pride that I was prompted to ask its nature. "With pleasure," was his courteous answer. "You will but increase my debt; I am a dog-stroker," and he forthwith proceeded to expound a calling which requires, I fancy, no mean powers of discrimination and diplomacy. The primary object of every dog-stroker is to become a legatee—particularly a dog-owner's legatee. Dog-strokers base their work on the theory of the line-of-least-resistance, which, in the case of the dog-owner, is the dog. But the subsidiary branches of this profession must also receive steadfast attention. Take the case of a fat poodle, an aged owner, and a companion. The stroker's air is domesticated and wistful; the stroke reverent and caressing. If all goes well, the owner's face is suffused with a kindly beam, which, in a modified degree, is reflected by the companion. Then: "I see you are fond of little dogs, my good man," falls benevolently on the ear. (The word "little" is generally used, though the bulky canine mass often stultifies the adjective.) The second step is intricate. The stroker must *melt away*, muttering: "Aye, lady, that I do; *my best friend was a dog; he died.*" Speak only so incoherently as to be perfectly audible, and keep melting. If a hurried whispering results in the companion requesting your address, simulate meek surprise and give it, *clearly*. The day's work is over. Within the next few days the stroker receives a substantial roll of notes, from an unseen hand, dedicated to him "In Fido's name," or "From a dog-lover to a dog-lover."

Again, a bulldog and youthful sporting owner demand an entirely different *rôle*. The stroke (now a resounding smack) must be accompanied by a hearty remark to the owner: "Fine beast, by Jove! reminds me of my Stickfast." The sign of a successful opening lies in an instant response from the sporting gentleman. The next step needs theatrical *finesse*. It consists in an affable sentence, which, jerked out in a cool, curt, matter-of-fact voice, lands the stroker in a comfortable club smoking-room with a standing invitation to dinner.

When dogs are in charge of children, the

THE PAST TENSE.

SHE: It's too bad poor Jack Goodfellow should have failed; he has so many friends, too!
HE (reflectively): He *had!*

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A POSER.

TOMMY (to Mr. Meekton): Am I as heavy as sister?

preliminaries are, of course, simpler; on the other hand, the shyly apologetic, amused demeanour necessary for one's initial introduction to their parents demands much patient rehearsal.

In fact, throughout the whole community every case at one point has its crux, and, neatly finished, stands alone an artistic triumph.

"In my early dog-stroking," he reflected, "I would bluntly say: 'That's a fine dog,' 'And he's got good teeth,' would be the answer. They thought I wanted to steal the creatures, which I personally loathe.

"Bites? Occasionally. I consider their effects neutral. The owner is just as likely to be irritated as sympathetic. They bring matters to a head."

* * * *

I have this moment heard that my ingenious friend is at a Pasteur Institute, under treatment for hydrophobia.

Herbert Westbrook.

ENTHUSIASTIC WIFE: I have such an indulgent husband?

HER FRIEND (spitefully): Yes, so I am told; but he sometimes indulges too much, doesn't he?

SHE: Do you think kissing is dangerous?

HE: Sometimes. I kissed a football player's "best girl" once!

HE: The doctor has forbidden Ferdy to play golf on account of his weak heart.

SHE: Weak heart! Why, he's proposed to every girl in the golf club.

MISTRESS: Bridget, you have altogether too much company down here.

BRIDGET: Sure, mum, it don't be my fault that yure kitchen's a thrifle too small!

CHILD: Do you think we shall have a thunderstorm to-night?

MOTHER: No.

CHILD: Then I needn't bother about saying my prayers. I'm only afraid of thunder.

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NOT QUITE WHAT WAS MEANT.

LADY (after third instalment of cigar-ash in the eye): Excuse me, sir, your ash wants knocking off.
SMOKER: That's all right, thanks; it will blow off in a minute.

THE RAY OF HOPE.

A SILENCE, choked with unspoken anguish, fell upon the two, as the flying gold of the ruined plane-trees swept across Rotten Row. It was a lover and his lass—but with no "Hey!" or "Nonny-no!"—no; a strangled sob was all that broke the silence.

At last the stillness became intolerable, and she lifted her brimming eyes to meet his stern, set face.

"And must it be good-bye?" she asked in tones of quivering emotion.

"It must," he answered, and his hand clenched tighter upon hers.

"But why—why?" she moaned.

For a moment he paused, gazing at the flowerlike face with passionate eyes, and then he answered—

"Because you are poor and I am rich."

A puzzled look stole over the dainty features as she glanced upwards at the sullen sky.

"But — but need that be a bar between us?" she faltered.

"Listen," he said, and led her to the long row of vacant chairs. "You have read novels—you have seen plays."

"I have," she murmured.

"Not once, but many times, you have encountered in them heroes, men to command our utmost sympathy and respect, who have loved in silence and ridden away without a word, letting concealment——"

"Yes, yes," she hastily broke in.

"And all for one reason—the girl they loved was rich. They were men—and they were proud men, so they mastered their tempestuous passion and went forth, perchance to let their bones bleach upon some foreign strand; and their feelings did them credit."

"Yes—but——" said the girl, and her pretty eyebrows knit.

"Am I less of a man than they?" he asked.

"N-no," she answered.

"Am I less proud than they?"

"Of course not, Hildebrand," she murmured.

"Cannot I make such a sacrifice as they did?"

"I don't quite——" began the girl.

"That is the noble simplicity of your nature," he rejoined with a tender glance. "You do not know the hard, malignant world. They will say that I bought you with my wretched riches as one would buy a horse or an electric brougham."

"Let them," said the noble girl.

MIGHT CHANGE HIS MIND.

SHE: This is so sudden! I must have at least a week to think it over.
HE: All right. Perhaps I'd better think it over myself at the same time.

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"They would ask me whether I would like to purchase any other article."

"Ah!" cried the girl.

"But I could bear their taunts and jeers. I could show an unruffled brow to the scorn of the multitude. But could I suffer the loss of my own self-respect? Could I allow myself to be reminded day by day that I—I who love you and should raise you upon a pinnacle above the crowd—had debased you to a dependence upon me for the very dress you wore and the very *bonbons* that you ate. No. No—sooner than that—good-bye, good-bye," and he flung his passionate arms around her and strained her to his palpitating heart.

The die was cast and he had conquered. Slowly they rose and walked in silence to the parting of the ways—he to go to Tilney Street and she to Shepherd's Bush.

Suddenly she halted.

"Stay!" she cried; "I have an uncle."

"Well?"

"No—unwell—and unmarried. He is rich, not beyond the dreams of avarice, but sufficient for its waking moments."

A look of hope dispelled the stern despair upon his face, as he gazed towards the west, where a crimson rift parted the leaden clouds.

"Then, perhaps—" he said.

"Perhaps," she softly murmured.

"Some day we shall meet again. Some day."

And they parted.

Harold White.

TEACHER: Can you, Peter, tell me what the first person singular is called?

PETER (after long thought): Adam.

MRS. JONES: Oh, yes, I bring my children up on the new hygienic food.

MRS. BROWN: How do you get them to eat it?

MRS. JONES: Oh, I bribe them with chocolate cake, lobster salad, and Welsh rarebits.

"YOU want a divorce from your wife, do you? On what grounds?"

"Incompatibility. She and the cook are quarrelling continually."

BUTLER: I may be poor, but there was a time when I rode in a carriage.

COOK: Yes, and your mother pushed it.

HUSBAND: Why do you buy such a lot of stamps at once?

WIFE: So that there will be sure to be *some* that won't get stuck together!

MISTRESS: I am not quite satisfied with your references.

APPLICANT: Naythur am I, mum · but they's the best I could get!

"PARLOUR POLO": THE NEW GAME FOR THE WINTER HOLIDAYS.

REQUISITES: The best polo sticks, and all the menservants available.

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THE ARREST OF A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CHAMPION OF CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

FROM THE PICTURE BY JEAN PAUL LAURENS.

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"THE EXCOMMUNICATION OF ROBERT THE PIOUS." BY JEAN PAUL LAURENS.

A GREAT PAINTER'S LIFE-STORY:

JEAN PAUL LAURENS AND HIS WORK.

By Alder Anderson.

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ARE we all mere children of circumstances, or not? Certain it is that the astonishingly versatile Gallic race, which, whatever its defects, is as the salt of our insipid Western civilisation, owes much to the climate of France. The sun that can blaze down so fiercely on the southern plateaux, though it may sometimes parch the ground, quickens into life many a human brain-cell that, but for such a stimulus, might have ever remained dormant. From humble, white-walled cottages, blinking with drowsy nonchalance in the shimmering glare of noontide, there issues a constant stream of young, intellectual giants, the blood of a sturdy peasant stock coursing vigorously through their veins, their minds seething caldrons of ardent fancies, unhampered in flight by any superincumbent atmosphere of conventional heredity. They set out to conquer the world, serenely confident that success will crown their efforts. When art is the magnet that attracts them, they submit themselves unresistingly to the mysterious influence. No better example of this can be found than the career of that great painter, Jean Paul Laurens.

Fourquevaux, the place of his birth, is a poor, insignificant hamlet—a score or two of rude cottages—right out of the beaten highways. Even to-day, the slightest incident assumes enormous importance in the eyes of the inhabitants. Much more was this the case fifty years ago. When, therefore, just about the middle of last century, a party of five men, strangers all, and a weary-footed mule dragging a cart high-piled with a heterogeneous collection of poles and ropes

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"ISABELLA AND CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS." BY JEAN PAUL LAURENS.

and ladders, was seen advancing along the Toulouse road, Fourquevaux was at once on the alert. Had the new-comers been less independent in manner, they might have been taken for a group of vagabond players, but it was clear to every eye that they were absolutely indifferent to the good will or the bad will of the cottagers. The refrain two or three of them were lustily trolling forth in some unknown *patois* sounded almost like a challenge. Without evincing the least hesitation, the leader of the little procession headed straight for the church, in the porch of which stood the *curé* evidently awaiting him. After a brief colloquy, the mule was tethered, the contents of the cart carried expeditiously into the church, and the door closed behind the whole group. What was the meaning of it? The baffled curiosity of the hamlet demanded an explanation from the *curé*, which, when given, was simple enough. The strangers were Italian artists settled in Toulouse, who had come to Fourquevaux to decorate the church.

Artists! To the ears of one of the listeners, a tall, fair-haired boy of twelve, this was the only word in the priest's answer that conveyed any signification. Four or five years previously, his mother had died, almost the only legacy she left him being an old prayer-book. In turning over the leaves of this, he had discovered an engraving of the Nativity. It was the first thing in the nature of a picture he had ever seen. To his wondering eyes it appeared like the production of some stupendous genius. The more he considered it, the more it fascinated him. Again and again he attempted to copy it, and then, in despair at the result of his efforts, wandered far from home, confiding his disappointment to none but the bubbling streams, the soft, fleecy clouds, and the whispering leaves. Now and then, on the distant horizon, he obtained glimpses of the spires of Toulouse, that great unknown world, so near yet so remote, a world where there existed supernaturally gifted beings able, without an effort, to make pictures as wonderful as that between the leaves of the old prayer-book. And now he had actually seen five of these artists! In the very instant they were at work behind that closed door. No hesitation was possible. He rapped boldly on the worm-eaten panel.

"What do you want?" angrily asked the swarthy-faced man who opened the door.

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"REPUDIATED." BY JEAN PAUL LAURENS.
A queen rejected by her husband, Robert the Pious, under threat of excommunication.

"To see you painting," was the breathless answer.

The door was about to be slammed in the intruder's face when another voice from the interior of the church, with the unmistakable intonation of a master, demanded the reason of the discussion.

"Let him come in if he wants to."

The door was slammed, but Jean Paul Laurens was on the side he wished to be. He had gained his point by that calm tenacity of purpose which has ever been his chief characteristic, and had taken the first decisive step in the career for which he seemed to be predestined.

Though the Italians had been but a short

"BUILDING THE WALL." BY JEAN PAUL LAURENS.

time in the church, they had proceeded about their business with the alacrity of men who are to be paid by the task. A light scaffolding had been erected, and already, on the erstwhile bare walls, the outlines of saintly personages, blue, green, and red, appeared. The figures seemed to be starting into life under the very eyes of the boy.

Humble or renowned, no artist is proof against sincere admiration, even that of a child, and the man on the scaffolding paused more than once in his rapid manipulation of the brush to cast a gratified side-glance at the face of his enthusiastic young idolator.

"How would you like to be an artist yourself, my little man?" he asked at length.

The flushed face, parted lips, and sparkling eyes gave an eloquent enough answer to the question. As a matter of fact, the Italian was just then on the look-out for an apprentice who could do the work of a man without

"DISENTOMBMENT OF THE VICTIMS OF THE INQUISITION AT CARCASSONNE." BY JEAN PAUL LAURENS.

wages, and his business instinct told him that here was an opportunity. Originally an artist's model, he was now turning to practical account the few stray hints he had picked up in the studios, and had even gained a certain amount of repute as a decorator of village churches. By the aid of stencils and other mechanical devices, plain, whitewashed walls were covered almost in the twinkling of an eye, and at a minimum of cost, with ruddy cherubs, multicoloured, meek-visaged saints, or weather-tanned, bearded apostles. Fourquevaux, however, furnished no criterion by which the man's real merits could be gauged; and, in the eyes of young Laurens, the humble decorator seemed to be an artist of genius. The boy's father, hard pressed by his son, and seeing no other prospect in view, consented without much difficulty to the Italian's proposal.

And now there commenced for the boy a dire martyrdom. Unremitting labour,

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"THE EMPRESS THEODORA." BY JEAN PAUL LAURENS.

and, as often as not, a kick or a harsh word in lieu of supper.

With the discerning eye of nascent genius, he very soon perceived that the master to whose fortunes he had attached himself was but a false prophet of art, and all his thoughts tended towards the day when he might find a better instructor. Meanwhile, in spite of the sneers of his fellow-workmen, he spent every spare minute he could snatch away in copying, with better and better results, some of the old engravings that were carried about as specimens. Nothing quenched his ardour, and at last, after two years' trial, the day came when the apprentice told himself he was ripe to strike out for himself. Watching his opportunity, he stole off one evening just as dusk was fading into darkness. All through the night he walked on, his stomach as empty as his purse, but his heart overbrimming with hope and courage. When morning broke, twenty good miles of road lay between him and his enemies. Eventually—how, he hardly knows to this day—he reached Toulouse, almost dead from starvation and exhaustion. In Toulouse he had an uncle, a printer, to whose house he directed his steps. The wanderer received a kindly welcome, though there was not much of this world's goods to spare for an outsider.

As luck would have it, his uncle's great crony—or, rather, his universal oracle—was an artist who, in spite of talent, had fallen on evil days. The boy's drawings were laid before this man, who declared unhesitatingly that they denoted clear evidence of more than ordinary talent. At the same time, he warned the printer solemnly that Art is but a niggardly stepmother often, and that many years must usually elapse before one of her votaries can buy butter for his bread, or even bread alone. In the interval he must somehow or other eat! On this, the good printer took counsel with his wife, the result being that they determined to make the necessary sacrifice, telling themselves, as if to palliate their good nature in their own eyes, that when the boy turned out a great painter, they and the whole family would shine in the reflected honour. Thus it was that Jean Paul Laurens took the second decisive step in his artistic career, and became a pupil of the Toulouse School of Fine Art, where his extraordinary assiduity at once became proverbial.

In the meantime, however, the printer and his wife were beginning to realise the onerous nature of the burden they had voluntarily assumed. Though no doubt they did their best to conceal their real feelings, the future great artist, whose powers of perception were already strongly developed, could not but perceive that he was occasionally looked upon

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"ST. BRUNO REJECTING THE PRESENTS OF THE PAPAL EMISSARIES." BY JEAN PAUL LAURENS.

St. Bruno, founder of the Carthusian Order, who had retired from Rome in disgust at the profligacy rampant in the Papal Court, rejecting the presents of the emissaries who sought to tempt him from his retreat.

as a useless member of the community. His pride at once took alarm. To earn sufficient money to support himself now became the one dominant idea in his mind. With this constant preoccupation in mind, he was one day examining some pictures in a shop-window. He looked at them with searching scrutiny. They were copies of pictures in the

Municipal Gallery, and as badly executed as copies usually are. Yet here they were actually offered for sale. The person who had painted them had, doubtless, been paid for his labour — was keeping himself by it probably!

"But I could do better than that!"

The cry broke from his lips involuntarily and reached the ears of the shopkeeper, who had approached the threshold the better to observe this persistent critic of his wares. So frankly unfavourable an opinion naturally touched the tradesman's *amour-propre*.

"THE MEN OF THE HOLY OFFICE." BY JEAN PAUL LAURENS.

"You paint, yourself, then?" he asked.

To the question thus unexpectedly addressed to him, the boy only managed to stammer out a monosyllabic affirmative.

"Now, look here," said the man: "for every copy you bring me, as good or better than those, I'll give you twenty francs."

He had paid double this for those in the window, but, as befitted a smart member of the trading community, he was a firm believer in the adage so tersely expressed by some great casuist, that "business is business." Several pictures were duly painted, and being admitted to be of good quality, were duly paid for. The picture-dealer, in fact, turned out not so good a man of business as the young artist dreaded, for Laurens, whom experience of life had already made sceptical, was quite prepared to be told that the copies were not up to sample, and were worth consequently only fifteen instead of twenty francs each. When the money was actually in his pocket, no heart in all Toulouse, possibly not in all France, beat a louder rat-tat-tat of hope and triumph, for he had thus taken the third and most decisive step in his career. He had achieved what the alchemists with all their crucibles and powders have ever attempted in vain—he had made gold that rang true and had an exchangeable value.

From that day forward he was able to maintain himself—modestly, it is true, but still to maintain himself. To ensure his entire independence, he discovered an obscure little inn, the hostess of which, in exchange for the equivalent of about thirty shillings monthly, consented to furnish him with bed and board.

But better days were in store for him. M. Villemesens, the professor at the Art School, had grown deeply interested in the progress made by his talented pupil, and frequently

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"THE DEATH OF SAINT GENEVIÈVE, PATRON SAINT OF PARIS." BY JEAN PAUL LAURENS.

invited the youth to his private studio. The heart of the professor's wife was, in turn, touched by the grim, self-denying industry and courage of this lonely boy so resolutely pursuing an ideal, and before very long it was arranged that young Laurens should take up his residence in the house as one of the family. Mme. Villemesens set herself the fascinating task of guiding a vigorous young intellect to develop all its latent resources.

"JOAN OF ARC MOUNTING THE SCAFFOLD TO BE BURNT AT THE STAKE." BY JEAN PAUL LAURENS.

Under her auspices, the boy speedily went through the usual scholastic curriculum, his only fellow-pupils being Mme. Villemesens' own children, a boy and a girl. In 1859, M. Villemesens died suddenly, and it was the advice of the whilom stranger that was thenceforth to be taken for the guidance of the family bark.

Just about this time the most coveted prize in the Toulouse Art School, a triennial scholarship of £120, fell vacant and was awarded to young Laurens, already almost a master of his art. The holder of the scholarship was allowed to pass three years in Paris, and to Paris, Laurens consequently proceeded. In 1860, when he was twenty-two, his first notable effort, "Cato of Utica," appeared on the walls of the Salon.

For the three years during which he received the scholarship, his life was unruffled; but when the last quarter's instalment had been paid, the ugly reality of poverty once more stared him in the face—not from any lack of industry on his part, but because the world could yet see no merit in canvases that have since found honoured places in some of the principal galleries of Europe and America. It is such a clever, discerning world!

From the very beginning of his career, Laurens turned almost exclusively to history for his subjects. Ragged old volumes he picked up for an odd *sou* or two in the boxes of books on the quays were his midnight companions. He had not received the usual, stereotyped form of education, so that his enthusiastic admiration for the sublime, and his instinctive repulsion for the base, qualities which to-day, as in his youth, characterise all he does, were unchecked by the cold-

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blooded, matter-of-fact explanations and sceptical reservations that the ordinary pedagogue so industriously sprinkles over youthful ardour. In the pages of his books he continually obtained glimpses of worlds of glittering splendour where another might have perceived only dry description. Shakespeare was one of the principal magicians who supplied him with an "Open, Sesame!" to realms of ecstatic bliss. "What masterpieces of painting this man would have given to the world had he been an artist as well as a poet!" was this reader's continual comment.

"Stop! Stop!" he exclaimed on one occasion to a friend who was reading out some tragic scene to him. "I can listen to no more at present. Too many images have already affected me. My brain feels ready to burst with the tumult of ideas you have evoked. What would I not give to possess the faculty you seem to have of perusing all that so calmly!"

A PANEL OF TRIPTYCH SHOWING JOAN OF ARC ENTERING ORLEANS AS A CELESTIAL DELIVERER. BY JEAN PAUL LAURENS.

The picture Laurens sent to the Salon in 1864, "Tiberius Smothered by Caligula," attracted a certain amount of official notice, and was the means of procuring for the artist an appointment as drawing-master in one of the Paris Municipal Schools. His daily bread, at least, was thus secured, and he at once put in execution a project he had long cherished of marrying his late professor's daughter.

But prosperity was long in coming to the house of the young couple. Public favour remained obstinately blind, and picture after picture was painted only to remain on the artist's hands. His courage never wavered, and there was no branch of art to which he did not turn his attention. At length, touched by such constancy, Fortune deigned to smile.

The war of 1870, so disastrous for France, occurred just at the moment when the artist's powers of mind and technique were fully matured. In his opinion, the two factors that, between them, brought about the undoing of his country were the predominance of the clerical influence and the Imperial *régime*. To this belief he gave visible expression in two pictures he sent to the Salon in 1872. One represented the execution—or, as some have it, the murder—of the Duc d'Enghien by order of Napoleon; the other portrayed one of the most sinister incidents in the early history of the Church of Rome—the judicial arraignment of the dead body of a Pope by his successor. This time the public applauded; the critics nodded approval. It was suddenly discovered that in Jean Paul Laurens, France possessed an historical painter of the very first rank. At one bound the artist leapt from obscurity into that brightly lit arena that has for name Notoriety, an arena in which he has ever since been one of the most conspicuous figures. In 1877, he obtained the highest professional recompense a French artist may aspire to—the Medal of Honour of the Salon.

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Of Laurens' work in general, it may be said that the greater proportion of it has been inspired by the artist's profound horror of priestly domination when aiming at mere worldly aggrandisement. The implacable tyranny of the Inquisition aroused his ire, as the folly of mankind in tamely submitting provoked his contempt. His "Men of the Holy Office" are dead to every tender feeling that ennobles humanity. Pity they know not; mercy they have none. All that opposes them must be remorselessly broken. "The Wall," with its lofty, titanic masonry, is symbolical of the almost impregnable nature of the fortress the mass of mankind allowed to be erected to its detriment by the few. Other pictures portray crimes perpetrated in the name of religion.

Among the phases in the long struggle between oppressed and oppressors illustrated by Laurens are incidents in the career of Bernard Délicieux, the French Dominican of the thirteenth century, who, three hundred years before Luther, openly revolted against the dogmas of Rome. For a time he gained enormous influence, but, at length, abandoned by his supporters, was himself dashed to pieces against the flinty buttresses of the fortress it had been his ambition to demolish. In the picture, "The Immured Victims of Carcassonne," Bernard Délicieux is haranguing the crowd while the disentombment of some of the hapless victims of the Inquisition is proceeding.

Jean Paul Laurens belongs to that category of artists who find their greatest recompense in the proud consciousness of having ceaselessly striven to realise none but noble inspirations. Moral independence, since the days when he was a boy, has ever appeared to him preferable to any material advantages Fortune could offer, and no base considerations of temporary gain have ever tempted him to pander to the routine tastes of his contemporaries. Now that he has long attained the summit of fame, his modesty is as striking as his indulgence for the shortcomings of beginners in his art, as innumerable students of both sexes, who have had the benefit of his counsel, can testify. He follows the progress of such as have the good fortune to be his regular pupils with a sustained and consistent interest, all the more noticeable because so rare, and counts neither time nor labour lost that may have contributed to or hastened the development of groping talent.

On one of the last occasions when the writer of the present remarks had the privilege of visiting Jean Paul Laurens, a registered packet was brought to the studio door by the postman. It bore Russian stamps and, on being opened, was found to contain a photograph of Tolstoi, with a eulogistic dedication from the Russian

JEAN PAUL LAURENS.

philosopher to the French artist. Nothing could be more significant than the gratification of the recipient as he examined the portrait. His modesty, it was clear, prevented him from at once perceiving that this was but the instinctive homage of one peer for another, for the aristocratic philosopher and the humbly born painter belong to the same lineage of genius. Both, by different paths, have pursued the same end, the enfranchisement of the human intellect.

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TOMMY & CO.

By JEROME K. JEROME.*

No. III.—THE EDUCATION OF THE GRINDLEYS.

THERE are few ways of the West Central district that have changed less within the last half-century than Nevill's Court, leading from Great New Street into Fetter Lane. Its north side still consists of the same quaint row of small, low shops that stood there—doing perhaps a little brisker business — when George the Fourth was King; its southern side of the same three substantial houses, each behind a strip of garden, pleasant by contrast with surrounding grimness, built long ago—some say before Queen Anne was dead.

Out of the largest of these, passing through the garden, then well cared-for, came one sunny Sunday morning, some fifteen years before the commencement proper of this story, one Solomon Appleyard, pushing in front of him a perambulator. At the brick wall surmounted by wooden railings that divides the garden from the court, Solomon paused, hearing behind him the voice of Mrs. Appleyard speaking from the doorstep.

"If I don't see you again before dinner-time, I'll try and get on without you, understand. Don't think of nothing but your pipe, and forget the child. And be careful of the crossings."

Mrs. Appleyard retired into the darkness. Solomon, steering the perambulator carefully, emerged from Nevill's Court without accident. The quiet streets drew Solomon westward. A vacant seat beneath the shade overlooking the Long Water in Kensington Gardens invited to rest.

"Piper?" suggested a small boy to Solomon. "*Sunday Times*, '*Server?*"

"My boy," said Mr. Appleyard, speaking slowly, "when you've been mewed up with newspapers eighteen hours a day for six days a week, you can do without 'em for a morning. Take 'em away. I want to forget the smell of 'em."

Solomon having assured himself that the party in the perambulator was still breathing, crossed his legs and lit his pipe.

"Hezekiah!"

The exclamation had been wrung from Solomon Appleyard by the approach of a stout, short man clad in a remarkably ill-fitting broadcloth suit.

"What, Sol, my boy?"

"It looked like you," said Solomon. "And then I said to myself: 'No; surely it can't be Hezekiah; he'll be at chapel.'"

"You run about," said Hezekiah, addressing a youth of some four summers he had been leading by the hand. "Don't you go out o' my sight; and whatever you do, don't you do injury to those new clothes of yours, or you'll wish you'd never been put into them. The truth is," continued Hezekiah to his friend, his sole surviving son and heir being out of earshot, "the morning tempted me. 'Tain't often I get a bit of fresh air."

"Doing well?"

"The business," replied Hezekiah, "is going up by leaps and bounds—leaps and bounds. But, of course, all that means harder work for me. It's from six in the morning till twelve o'clock at night."

"There's nothing I know of," returned Solomon, who was something of a pessimist, "that's given away free gratis for nothing except misfortune."

"Keeping yourself up to the mark ain't too easy," continued Hezekiah; "and when it comes to other folks, play's all they think of. Talk religion to them—why, they laugh at you! What the world's coming to, I don't know. How's the printing business doing?"

"The printing business," responded the other, removing his pipe and speaking somewhat sadly, "the printing business looks like being a big thing. Capital, of course, is what hampers me—or, rather, the want of it. But Janet, she's careful; she don't waste much, Janet don't."

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"Now, with Anne," replied the other, "it's all the other way—pleasure, gaiety, a day at Rosherville or the Crystal Palace, anything to waste money."

"Ah! she was always fond of her bit of fun," remembered Solomon.

"Fun!" retorted Hezekiah. "I like a bit of fun myself, but not if you've got to pay for it. Where's the fun in that?"

"What I ask myself sometimes," said Solomon, looking straight in front of him, "is what do we do it for?"

"What do we do what for?"

"Work like blessed slaves, depriving ourselves of all enjoyments. What's the sense of it? What——"

A voice from the perambulator beside him broke the thread of Solomon Appleyard's discourse. The sole surviving son of Hezekiah Grindley, seeking distraction and finding none, had crept back unperceived. A perambulator! A thing his experience told him out of which excitement in some form or another could generally be obtained. You worried it and took your chance. Either it howled, in which case you had to run for your life, followed—and, unfortunately, overtaken nine times out of ten—by a whirlwind of vengeance; or it gurgled, in which case the heavens smiled and halos descended on your head. In either event you escaped the deadly *ennui* that is the result of continuous virtue. Master Grindley, his star having pointed out to him a peacock's feather lying on the ground, had, with one eye upon his unobservant parent, removed the complicated coverings sheltering Miss Helvetia Appleyard from the world, and anticipating by a quarter of a century the prime enjoyment of British youth, had set to work to tickle that lady on the nose. Miss Helvetia Appleyard awakened, did precisely what the tickled British maiden of to-day may be relied upon to do under corresponding circumstances: she first of all took swift and comprehensive survey of the male thing behind the feather. Had he been displeasing in her eyes, she would, one may rely upon it, have anteceded the behaviour in similar case of her descendant of to-day—that is to say, have expressed resentment in no uncertain terms. Master Nathaniel Grindley, proving, however, to her taste, that which might have been considered impertinence became accepted as a fit and proper form of introduction. Miss Appleyard smiled graciously—nay, further, intimated desire for more.

"That your only one?" asked the paternal Grindley.

"She's the only one," replied Solomon, speaking in tones less pessimistic.

Miss Appleyard had with the help of Grindley junior wriggled herself into a sitting posture. Grindley junior continued his attentions, the lady indicating by signs the various points at which she was most susceptible.

"Pretty picture they make together, eh?" suggested Hezekiah in a whisper to his friend.

"Never saw her take to anyone like that before," returned Solomon, likewise in a whisper.

A neighbouring church clock chimed twelve. Solomon Appleyard, knocking the ashes from his pipe, arose.

"Don't see any reason myself why we shouldn't see a little more of one another than we do," suggested Grindley senior, shaking hands.

"Give us a look-up one Sunday afternoon," suggested Solomon. "Bring the young[illegible] with you."

Solomon Appleyard and Hezekiah Grindley had started life within a few months of one another some five-and-thirty years before. Likewise within a few hundred yards of one another, Solomon at his father's bookselling and printing establishment on the east side of the High Street of a small Yorkshire town; Hezekiah at his father's grocery shop upon the west side opposite. Both had married farmers' daughters. Solomon's natural bent towards gaiety Fate had corrected by directing his affections to a partner instinct with Yorkshire shrewdness; and with shrewdness go other qualities that make for success rather than for happiness. Hezekiah, had circumstances been equal, might have been his friend's rival for Janet's capable and saving hand, had not sweet-tempered, laughing Annie Glossop—directed by Providence to her moral welfare, one must presume—fallen in love with him. Between Janet's virtues and Annie's three hundred golden sovereigns Hezekiah had not hesitated a moment. Golden sovereigns were solid facts; wifely virtues, by a serious-minded and strong-willed husband, could be instilled—at all events, light-heartedness suppressed. The two men, Hezekiah urged by his own ambition, Solomon by his wife's, had arrived in London within a year of one another: Hezekiah to open a grocer's shop in Kensington, which those who should have known assured him was a hopeless neighbourhood:

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but Hezekiah had the instinct of a money-maker. Solomon, after looking about him, had fixed upon a roomy, substantial house in Nevill's Court as a promising foundation for a printer's business. That was ten years ago. The two friends, scorning delights, living laborious days, had seen but little of one another. Light-hearted Annie had borne

"'I'll try and get on without you, understand.'"

to her dour partner two children who had died. Nathaniel George, with the luck supposed to wait on number three, had lived on, and, inheriting fortunately the temperament of his mother, had brought sunshine into the gloomy rooms above the shop in High Street, Kensington. Mrs. Grindley, grown weak and fretful, had rested from her labours.

Mrs. Appleyard's guardian angel, prudent like his *protégée*, had waited till Solomon's business was well established before despatching the stork to Nevill's Court, with a little girl. Later he had sent another, who, not finding the close air of St. Dunstan to his liking, had found his way back again; thus passing out of this story and all others. And there remained to carry on the legend of the Grindleys and the Appleyards only Nathaniel George, now aged five, and Janet Helvetia, quite a beginner, who took life seriously.

There are no such things as facts. Narrow-minded folk—surveyors, auctioneers, and such-like—would have insisted that the garden between the old Georgian house and Nevill's Court was a strip of land one hundred and eighteen feet by ninety-two, containing a laburnum tree, six laurel bushes, and a dwarf deodora. To Nathaniel George and Janet Helvetia it was the land of Thule, "the furthest boundaries of which no man has reached." On rainy Sunday afternoons they played in the great, gloomy pressroom, where silent ogres, standing motionless, stretched out iron arms to seize them as they ran. Then just when Nathaniel George was eight, and Janet Helvetia four and a half, Hezekiah launched the celebrated "Grindley's Sauce." It added a relish to chops and steaks, transformed cold mutton into a luxury, and swelled the head of Hezekiah Grindley—which was big enough in all conscience as it was—and shrivelled up his little hard heart. The Grindleys and the Appleyards visited no more. As a sensible fellow ought to have seen for himself, so thought Hezekiah, the Sauce had altered all things. The possibility of a marriage between their children, things having remained equal, might have been a pretty fancy; but the son of the great Grindley, whose name in three-foot letters faced the world from every hoarding, would have to look higher than a printer's daughter. Solomon, a sudden and vehement convert to the principles of mediæval feudalism, would rather see his only child, granddaughter of the author of "The History of Kettlewell" and other works, dead and buried than married to a grocer's son, even though he might inherit a fortune made out of poisoning the public with a mixture of mustard and sour beer. It was

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many years before Nathaniel George and Janet Helvetia met one another again, and when they did they had forgotten one another.

Hezekiah S. Grindley, a short, stout, and pompous gentleman, sat under a palm in the gorgeously furnished drawing-room of his big house at Notting Hill. Mrs. Grindley, a thin, faded woman, the despair of her dressmaker, sat as near to the fire as its massive and imposing copper outworks would permit, and shivered. Grindley junior, a fair-haired, well-shaped youth, with eyes that the other sex found attractive, leant with his hands in his pockets against a scrupulously robed statue of Diana, and appeared uncomfortable.

"I'm making the money—making it hand over fist. All you'll have to do will be to spend it," Grindley senior was explaining to his son and heir.

"I'll do that all right, dad."

"I'm not so sure of it," was his father's opinion. "You've got to prove yourself worthy to spend it. Don't you think I shall be content to have slaved all these years merely to provide a brainless young idiot with the means of self-indulgence. I leave my money to somebody worthy of me. Understand, sir?—somebody worthy of me."

Mrs. Grindley commenced a sentence; Mr. Grindley turned his small eyes upon her. The sentence remained unfinished.

"You were about to say something," her husband reminded her.

Mrs. Grindley said it was nothing.

"If it is anything worth hearing—if it is anything that will assist the discussion, let's have it." Mr. Grindley waited. "If not, if you yourself do not consider it worth finishing, why have begun it?"

Mr. Grindley returned to his son and heir. "You haven't done too well at school—in fact, your school career has disappointed me."

"I know I'm not clever," Grindley junior offered as an excuse.

"Why not? Why aren't you clever?"

His son and heir was unable to explain.

"You are my son—why aren't you clever? It's laziness, sir; sheer laziness!"

"I'll try and do better at Oxford, sir—honour bright I will!"

"You had better," advised him his father; "because I warn you, your whole future depends upon it. You know me. You've got to be a credit to me, to be worthy of the name of Grindley—or the name, my boy, is all you'll have."

Old Grindley meant it, and his son knew that he meant it. The old Puritan principles and instincts were strong in the old gentleman—formed, perhaps, the better part of him. Idleness was an abomination to him; devotion to pleasure, other than the pleasure of money-making, a grievous sin in his eyes. Grindley junior fully intended to do well at Oxford, and might have succeeded. In accusing himself of lack of cleverness, he did himself an injustice. He had brains, he had energy, he had character. Our virtues can be our stumbling-blocks as well as our vices. Young Grindley had one admirable virtue that needs, above all others, careful controlling: he was amiability itself. Before the charm and sweetness of it, Oxford snobbishness went down. The Sauce, against the earnest counsel of its own advertisement, was forgotten; the pickles passed by. To escape the natural result of his popularity would have needed a stronger will than young Grindley possessed. For a time the true state of affairs was hidden from the eye of Grindley senior. To "slack" it this term, with the full determination of "swotting" it the next, is always easy; the difficulty begins only with the new term. Possibly with luck young Grindley might have retrieved his position and covered up the traces of his folly, but for an unfortunate accident. Returning to college with some other choice spirits at two o'clock in the morning, it occurred to young Grindley that trouble might be saved all round by cutting out a pane of glass with a diamond ring and entering his rooms, which were on the ground floor, by the window. That, in mistake for his own, he should have selected the bedroom of the College Rector was a misfortune that might have occurred to anyone who had commenced the evening on champagne and finished it on whisky. Young Grindley, having been warned already twice before, was "sent down." And then, of course, the whole history of the three wasted years came out. Old Grindley in his study chair having talked for half an hour at the top of his voice, chose, partly by reason of physical necessity, partly by reason of dormant dramatic instinct, to speak quietly and slowly.

"I'll give you one chance more, my boy, and one only. I've tried you as a gentleman—perhaps that was my mistake. Now I'll try you as a grocer."

"As a what?"

"As a grocer, sir—g-r-o-c-e-r—grocer, a man who stands behind a counter in a white apron and his shirt-sleeves; who sells tea and sugar and candied peel and suchlike

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things to customers—old ladies, little girls; who rises at six in the morning, takes down the shutters, sweeps out the shop, cleans the windows; who has half an hour for his dinner of corned beef and bread; who puts

"Mr. Hezekiah Grindley."

up the shutters at ten o'clock at night, tidies up the shop, has his supper, and goes to bed, feeling his day has not been wasted. I meant to spare you. I was wrong. You shall go through the mill as I went through it. If at at the end of two years you've done well with your time, learned something—learned to be a man, at all events—you can come to me and thank me."

"I'm afraid, sir," suggested Grindley junior, whose handsome face during the last few minutes had grown very white, "I might not make a very satisfactory grocer. You see, sir, I've had no experience."

"I am glad to see you have some sense," returned his father drily. "You are quite right. Even a grocer's business requires learning. It will cost me a little money; but it will be the last I shall ever spend upon you. For the first year you will have to be apprenticed, and I shall allow you something to live on. It shall be more than I had at your age—we'll say a pound a week. After that I shall expect you to keep yourself."

Grindley senior rose. "You need not give me your answer till the evening. You are of age. I have no control over you unless you are willing to agree. You can go my way, or you can go your own."

Young Grindley, who had inherited a good deal of his father's grit, felt very much inclined to go his own; but, hampered on the other hand by the sweetness of disposition he had inherited from his mother, was unable to withstand the argument of that lady's tears, so that evening accepted old Grindley's terms, asking only as a favour that the scene of his probation might be in some out-of-the-way neighbourhood where there would be little chance of his being met by old friends.

"I have thought of all that," answered his father. "My object isn't to humiliate you more than is necessary for your good. The shop I have already selected, on the assumption that you would submit, is as quiet and out-of-the-way as you could wish. It is in a turning off Fetter Lane, where you'll see few other people than printers and caretakers. You'll lodge with a woman, a Mrs. Postwhistle, who seems a very sensible person. She'll board you and lodge you, and every Saturday you'll receive a post-office order for six shillings, out of which you'll find yourself in clothes. You can take with you sufficient to last you for the first six months, but no more. At the end of the year you can change if you like and go to another shop, or make your own arrangements with Mrs. Postwhistle. If all is settled, you go there to-morrow. You go out of this house to-morrow in any event."

Mrs. Postwhistle was a large, placid lady of philosophic temperament. Hitherto the little

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grocer's shop in Rolls Court, Fetter Lane, had been easy of management by her own unaided efforts; but the neighbourhood was rapidly changing. Other grocers' shops were disappearing one by one, making way for huge blocks of buildings, where hundreds of iron presses, singing day and night, spread to the earth the song of the Mighty Pen. There were hours when the little shop could hardly accommodate its crowd of customers. Mrs. Postwhistle, of a bulk not to be moved quickly, had, after mature consideration, conquering a natural disinclination to change, decided to seek assistance.

Young Grindley, alighting from a four-wheeled cab in Fetter Lane, marched up the court, followed by a weak-kneed wastrel staggering under the weight of a small box. In the doorway of the little shop, young Grindley paused and raised his hat.

"Mrs. Postwhistle?"

The lady, from her chair behind the counter, rose slowly.

"I am Mr. Nathaniel Grindley, the new assistant."

The weak-kneed wastrel let fall the box with a thud upon the floor. Mrs. Postwhistle looked her new assistant up and down.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Postwhistle. "Well, I shouldn't 'ave felt instinctively it must be you, not if I'd 'ad to pick you out of a crowd. But if you tell me so, why, I suppose you are. Come in."

The weak-kneed wastrel receiving, to his astonishment, a shilling, departed.

Grindley senior had selected wisely. Mrs. Postwhistle's theory was that although very few people in this world understood their own business, they understood it better than anyone else could understand it for them. If handsome, well-educated young gentlemen, who gave shillings to wastrels, felt they wanted to become smart and capable grocers' assistants, that was their affair. Her business was to teach them their work, and, for her own sake, to see that they did it. A month went by. Mrs. Postwhistle found her new assistant hard-working, willing, somewhat clumsy, but with a smile and a laugh that transformed mistakes, for which another would have been soundly rated, into welcome variations of the day's monotony.

"If you were the sort of woman that cared to make your fortune," said one William Clodd, an old friend of Mrs. Postwhistle's, young Grindley having descended into the cellar to grind coffee, "I'd tell you what to do. Take a bun-shop somewhere in the neighbourhood of a girls' school, and put that assistant of yours in the window. You'd do a roaring business."

"There's a mystery about 'im," said Mrs. Postwhistle.

"Know what it is?"

"If I knew what it was, I shouldn't be calling it a mystery," replied Mrs. Postwhistle, who was a stylist in her way.

"How did you get him? Win him in a raffle?"

"Jones, the agent, sent 'im to me all in a 'urry. An assistant is what I really wanted, not an apprentice; but the premium was good, and the references everything one could desire."

"Grindley, Grindley," murmured Clodd. "Any relation to the Sauce, I wonder?"

"A bit more wholesome, I should say, from the look of him," thought Mrs. Postwhistle.

The question of a post-office to meet its growing need had long been under discussion by the neighbourhood. Mrs. Postwhistle was approached upon the subject. Grindley junior, eager for anything that might bring variety into his new, cramped existence, undertook to qualify himself. Within two months the arrangements were complete. Grindley junior divided his time between dispensing groceries and despatching telegrams and letters, and was grateful for the change.

Grindley junior's mind was fixed upon the fashioning of a cornucopia to receive a quarter of a pound of moist. The customer, an extremely young lady, was seeking to hasten his operations by tapping incessantly with a penny on the counter. It did not hurry him; it only worried him. Grindley junior had not acquired facility in the fashioning of cornucopias—the vertex would invariably become unrolled at the last moment, allowing the contents to dribble out on to the floor or counter. Grindley junior was sweet-tempered as a rule, but when engaged upon the fashioning of a cornucopia, was irritable.

"Hurry up, old man!" urged the extremely young lady. "I've got another appointment in less than half an hour."

"Oh, hang the thing!" said Grindley junior, as the paper for the fourth time reverted to its original shape.

An older lady, standing behind the extremely young lady, and holding a telegram-form in her hand, looked indignant.

"Temper, temper," remarked the extremely young lady in reproving tone.

The fifth time was more successful. The extremely young lady went out, commenting

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upon the waste of time always resulting when boys were employed to do the work of men. The older lady, a haughty person, handed across her telegram with the request that it should be sent off at once.

Grindley junior took his pencil from his pocket and commenced to count.

"*Digniori*, not *digniorus*," commented Grindley junior, correcting the word, "*datur digniori*, dative singular." Grindley junior, still irritable from the struggle with the cornucopia, spoke sharply.

The haughty lady withdrew her eyes from a spot some ten miles beyond the back of the shop, where hitherto they had been resting, and fixed them for the first time upon Grindley junior.

"Thank you," said the haughty lady.

Grindley junior looked up and immediately, to his annoyance, felt that he was blushing. Grindley junior blushed easily—it annoyed him very much.

The haughty young lady also blushed. She did not often blush; when she did, she felt angry with herself.

"A shilling and a penny," demanded Grindley junior.

The haughty young lady counted out the money and departed. Grindley junior, peeping from behind a tin of Abernethy biscuits, noticed that as she passed the window she turned and looked back. She was a very pretty, haughty lady. Grindley junior rather admired dark, level brows and finely cut, tremulous lips, especially when combined with a mass of soft, brown hair, and a rich olive complexion that flushed and paled as one looked at it.

"Might send that telegram off, if you've nothing else to do, and there's no particular reason for keeping it back," suggested Mrs. Postwhistle.

"It's only just been handed in," explained Grindley junior, somewhat hurt.

"You've been looking at it for the last five minutes by the clock," said Mrs. Postwhistle.

Grindley junior sat down to the machine. The name and address of the sender was Helvetia Appleyard, Nevill's Court.

Three days passed—singularly empty days they appeared to Grindley junior. On the fourth, Helvetia Appleyard had occasion to despatch another telegram, this time entirely in English.

"One and fourpence," sighed Grindley junior.

Miss Appleyard drew forth her purse. The shop was empty.

"How did you come to know Latin?" inquired Miss Appleyard in quite a casual tone.

"I picked up a little at school. It was a phrase I happened to remember," confessed Grindley junior, wondering why he should be feeling ashamed of himself.

"I am always sorry," said Miss Appleyard, "when I see anyone content with the lower life whose talents might, perhaps, fit him for the higher." Something about the tone and manner of Miss Appleyard reminded Grindley junior of his former Rector. Each seemed to have arrived by different roads at the same philosophical aloofness from the world, tempered by chastened interest in human phenomena. "Would you like to try to raise yourself—to improve yourself—to educate yourself?"

An unseen little rogue, who was enjoying himself immensely, whispered to Grindley junior to say nothing but "Yes," he should.

"Will you let me help you?" asked Miss Appleyard. And the simple and heartfelt gratitude with which Grindley junior closed upon the offer proved to Miss Appleyard how true it is that to do good to others is the highest joy.

Miss Appleyard had come prepared for possible acceptance. "You had better begin with this," thought Miss Appleyard. "I have marked the passages that you should learn by heart. Make a note of anything you do not understand, and I will explain it to you when—when next I happen to be passing."

Grindley junior took the book—"Bell's Introduction to the Study of the Classics, for Use of Beginners"—and held it between both hands. Its price was ninepence, but Grindley junior appeared to regard it as a volume of great value.

It will be hard work at first," Miss Appleyard warned him; "but you must persevere. I have taken an interest in you; you must try not to disappoint me."

And Miss Appleyard, feeling all the sensations of a Hypatia, departed, taking light with her and forgetting to pay for the telegram. Miss Appleyard belonged to the class that young ladies who pride themselves on being tiresomely ignorant and foolish sneer at as "blue-stockings"; that is to say, possessing brains, she had felt the necessity of using them. Solomon Appleyard, widower, a sensible old gentleman, prospering in the printing business, and seeing no necessity for a woman regarding herself as nothing but a doll, a somewhat uninteresting plaything the

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newness once worn off, thankfully encouraged her. Miss Appleyard had returned from Girton wise in many things, but not in knowledge of the world, which knowledge, too early acquired, does not always make for good in young man or woman. A serious little virgin, Miss Appleyard's ambition was to help the human race. What more useful work could have come to her hand than the raising of this poor but intelligent young grocer's assistant unto the knowledge and the love of higher things. That Grindley junior happened to be an exceedingly good-looking and charming young grocer's assistant had nothing to do with the matter, so Miss Appleyard would have informed you. In her own reasoning she was convinced that her interest in him would have been the same had he been the least attractive of his sex. That there could be danger in such relationship never occurred to her. Miss Appleyard, a convinced Radical, could not conceive the possibility of a grocer's assistant regarding the daughter of a well-to-do printer in any other light than that of a graciously condescending patron. That there could be danger to herself—you would have been sorry you had suggested the idea. The expression of lofty scorn would have made you feel yourself contemptible.

"'How did you come to know Latin?'"

Miss Appleyard's judgment of mankind was justified; no more promising pupil could have been selected. It was really marvellous the progress made by Grindley junior under the tutelage of Helvetia Appleyard. His earnestness, his enthusiasm, it quite touched the heart of Helvetia Appleyard. There were many points, it is true, that puzzled Grindley junior. Each time the list of them grew longer. But when Helvetia Appleyard explained them, all became clear. She marvelled herself at her own wisdom, that in a moment made darkness luminous to this young man; his rapt attention while she talked, it was most encouraging. The boy must surely be a genius. To think that but for her intuition he might have remained wasted in a grocer's shop! To rescue such a gem from oblivion, to polish it, was surely the duty of a conscientious Hypatia. Two visits—three visits a week to the little shop in Rolls Court were quite inadequate, so many passages there were required elucidation. London in early morning became their classroom: the great, wide, empty silent streets; the mist-curtained parks, the silence broken only by the blackbirds' amorous whistle, the thrushes invitation to delight; the old gardens, hidden behind narrow ways. Nathaniel George and Janet Helvetia would rest upon a seat, no living creature within sight, save perhaps a passing

policeman or some dissipated cat. Janet Helvetia would expound. Nathaniel George, his fine eyes fixed on hers, seemed never to tire of drinking in her wisdom.

There were times when Janet Helvetia, to reassure herself as to the maidenly correctness of her behaviour, had to recall quite forcibly the fact that she was the daughter of Solomon Appleyard, owner of the big printing establishment; and he a simple grocer. One day, raised a little in the social scale, thanks to her, Nathaniel George would marry someone in his own rank of life. Reflecting upon the future of Nathaniel George, Janet Helvetia could not escape a shade of sadness. It was difficult to imagine precisely the wife she would have chosen for Nathaniel George. She hoped he would do nothing foolish. Rising young men so often marry wives that hamper rather than help them.

One Sunday morning in late autumn, they walked and talked in the shady garden of Lincoln's Inn. Greek they thought it was they had been talking; as a matter of fact, a much older language. A young gardener was watering flowers, and as they passed him he grinned. It was not an offensive grin, rather a sympathetic grin; but Miss Appleyard did not like being grinned at. What was there to grin at? Her personal appearance? some *gaucherie* in her dress? Impossible. No lady in all St. Dunstan was ever more precise. She glanced at her companion: a clean-looking, well-groomed, well-dressed youth. Suddenly it occurred to Miss Appleyard that she and Grindley junior were holding each other's hand. Miss Appleyard was justly indignant.

"How dare you!" said Miss Appleyard. "I am exceedingly angry with you! How dare you!"

The olive skin was scarlet. There were tears in the hazel eyes.

"Leave me this minute!" commanded Miss Appleyard.

Instead of which, Grindley junior seized both her hands.

"I love you! I adore you! I worship you!" poured forth young Grindley, forgetful of all Miss Appleyard had ever told him concerning the folly of tautology.

"You had no right," said Miss Appleyard.

"I couldn't help it," pleaded young Grindley. "And that isn't the worst."

Miss Appleyard paled visibly. For a grocer's assistant to dare to fall in love with her, especially after all the trouble she had taken with him! What could be worse?

"I'm not a grocer," continued young Grindley, deeply conscious of crime. "I mean, not a real grocer."

And Grindley junior then and there made a clean breast of the whole sad, terrible tale of shameless deceit, practised by the greatest villain the world had ever produced, upon the noblest and most beautiful maiden that ever turned grim London town into a fairy city of enchanted ways.

Not at first could Miss Appleyard entirely grasp it; not till hours later, when she sat alone in her own room, where, fortunately for himself, Grindley junior was not, did the whole force and meaning of the thing come home to her. It was a large room, taking up quite half of the top storey of the big Georgian house in Nevill's Court; but even as it was, Miss Appleyard felt cramped.

"For a year—for nearly a whole year," said Miss Appleyard, addressing the bust of William Shakespeare, "have I been slaving my life out teaching him elementary Latin and the first five books of Euclid!"

As it has been remarked, it was fortunate for Grindley junior he was out of reach. The bust of William Shakespeare maintained its irritating aspect of benign philosophy.

"I suppose I should," mused Miss Appleyard, "if he had told me at first—as he ought to have told me—of course I should naturally have had nothing more to do with him. I suppose," mused Miss Appleyard, "a man in love, if he is really in love, doesn't quite know what he's doing. I suppose one ought to make allowances. But, oh! when I think of it——"

And then Grindley junior's guardian angel must surely have slipped into the room, for Miss Appleyard, irritated beyond endurance at the philosophical indifference of the bust of William Shakespeare, turned away from it, and as she did so, caught sight of herself in the looking-glass. Miss Appleyard approached the glass a little nearer. A woman's hair is never quite as it should be. Miss Appleyard, standing before the glass, began, she knew not why, to find reasons excusing Grindley junior. After all, was not forgiveness an excellent thing in woman? None of us are quite perfect. The guardian angel of Grindley junior seized the opportunity.

That evening Solomon Appleyard sat upright in his chair, feeling confused. So far as he could understand it, a certain young man, a grocer's assistant, but not a

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grocer's assistant—but that, of course, was not his fault, his father being an old brute—had behaved most abominably; but not, on reflection, as badly as he might have done, and had acted on the whole very honourably, taking into consideration the fact that one supposed he could hardly help it. Helvetia was, of course, very indignant with him, but on the other hand, did not quite see what else she could have done, she being not at all sure whether she really cared for him or whether she didn't; that everything had been quite proper and would not have happened if she had known it; that everything was her fault, except most things, which weren't; but that of the two she blamed herself entirely, seeing that she could not have guessed anything of the kind. And did he, Solomon Appleyard, think that she ought to be very angry and never marry anybody else, or was she justified in overlooking it and engaging herself to the only man she felt she could ever love?

"You mustn't think, dad, that I meant to deceive you. I should have told you at the beginning—you know I would—if it hadn't all happened so suddenly."

"Let me see," said Solomon Appleyard, "did you tell me his name, or didn't you?"

"Nathaniel," said Miss Appleyard. "Didn't I mention it?"

"Don't happen to know his surname, do you?" inquired her father.

"Grindley," explained Miss Appleyard—"the son of Grindley, the Sauce man."

Miss Appleyard experienced one of the surprises of her life. Never before to her recollection had her father thwarted a single wish of her life. A widower for the last twelve years, his chief delight had been to humour her. His voice, as he passionately swore that never with his consent should his daughter marry the son of Hezekiah Grindley, sounded strange to her. Pleadings, even tears, for the first time in her life proved fruitless.

Here was a pretty kettle of fish! That Grindley junior should defy his own parent, risk possibly the loss of his inheritance, had seemed to both a not improper proceeding. When Nathaniel George had said with fine enthusiasm: "Let him keep his money if he will; I'll make my own way; there isn't enough money in the world to pay for losing you!" Janet Helvetia, though she had expressed disapproval of such unfilial attitude, had in secret sympathised. But for her to disregard the wishes of her own doting father was not to be thought of. What was to be done?

Perhaps one Peter Hope, residing in Gough Square hard by, might help young folks in sore dilemma with wise counsel. Peter Hope, editor and part-proprietor of *Good Humour*, one penny weekly, was much esteemed by Solomon Appleyard, printer and publisher of aforesaid paper.

"A good fellow, old Hope," Solomon would often impress upon his managing clerk. "Don't worry him more than you can help; things will improve. We can trust him."

Peter Hope sat at his desk, facing Miss Appleyard. Grindley junior sat on the cushioned seat beneath the middle window. *Good Humour's* sub-editor stood before the fire, her hands behind her back.

The case appeared to Peter Hope to be one of exceeding difficulty.

"Of course," explained Miss Appleyard, "I shall never marry without my father's consent."

Peter Hope thought the resolution most proper.

"On the other hand," continued Miss Appleyard, "nothing shall induce me to marry a man I do not love." Miss Appleyard thought the probabilities were that she would end by becoming a female missionary.

Peter Hope's experience had led him to the conclusion that young people sometimes changed their mind.

The opinion of the House, clearly though silently expressed, was that Peter Hope's experience, as regarded this particular case, counted for nothing.

"I shall go straight to the Governor," explained Grindley junior, "and tell him that I consider myself engaged for life to Miss Appleyard. I know what will happen—I know the sort of idea he has got into his head. He will disown me, and I shall go off to Africa."

Peter Hope was unable to see how Grindley junior's disappearance into the wilds of Africa was going to assist the matter under discussion.

Grindley junior's view was that the wilds of Africa would afford a most fitting background to the passing away of a blighted existence.

Peter Hope had a suspicion that Grindley junior had for the moment parted company with that sweet reasonableness that otherwise, so Peter Hope felt sure, was Grindley junior's guiding star.

"I mean it, sir," reasserted Grindley junior. "I am——" Grindley junior was about to add "well educated"; but divining

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"London in early morning became their classroom."

that education was a topic not pleasing at the moment to the ears of Helvetia Appleyard, had tact enough to substitute "—not a fool. I can earn my own living; and I should like to get away."

"I seems to me——" said the sub-editor.

"Now, Tommy—I mean Jane," warned her Peter Hope. He always called her Jane in company, unless he was excited. "I know what you are going to say. I won't have it."

"I was only going to say——" urged the sub-editor, in tone of one suffering injustice.

"I quite know what you were going to say," retorted Peter hotly. "I can see it by your chin. You are going to take their part and suggest their acting undutifully towards their parents."

"I wasn't," returned the sub-editor. "I was only——"

"You were," persisted Peter. "I ought not to have allowed you to be present. I might have known you would interfere."

"—going to say that we are in want of some help in the office. You know we are. And that if Mr. Grindley will be content with a small salary——"

"Small salary be hanged!" snarled Peter.

"—there would be no need for his going to Africa."

"And how would that help us?" demanded Peter. "Even if the boy were so—so headstrong, so unfilial as to defy his father, who has worked for him all these years, how would that remove the obstacle of Mr. Appleyard's refusal?"

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"Why, don't you see——" explained the sub-editor.

"No, I don't," snapped Peter.

"If, on his declaring to his father that nothing will ever induce him to marry any other woman but Miss Appleyard, his father disowns him, as he thinks it likely——"

"A dead cert!" was Grindley junior's conviction.

"Very well; he is no longer old Grindley's son, and what possible objection can Mr. Appleyard have to him then?"

Peter Hope arose and expounded at length and in suitable language the folly and uselessness of the scheme. But what chance had ever the wisdom of Age against the enthusiasm of Youth reaching for its object. Poor Peter, expostulating, was swept into the conspiracy. Grindley junior the next morning stood before his father in the private office in High Holborn.

"I am sorry, sir," said Grindley junior, "if I have proved a disappointment to you."

"Hang your sympathy!" said Grindley senior. "Keep it till you are asked for it."

"I hope we part friends, sir," said Grindley junior, holding out his hand.

"Why do you hate me?" asked Grindley senior. "I have thought of nothing but you these five-and-twenty years."

"I don't, sir," answered Grindley junior. "I can't say I love you. It did not seem to me you—you wanted it. But I like you, sir, and I respect you. And—and I'm sorry to have to hurt you, sir."

"And you are determined to give up all your prospects, all the money, for the sake of this—this girl?"

"It doesn't seem like giving up anything, sir," replied Grindley junior simply.

"It isn't so much as I thought it was going to be," said the old man after a pause. "Perhaps it is for the best. I might have been more obstinate if things had been going all right. The Lord has chastened me."

"Isn't the business doing well, dad?" asked the young man, with sorrow in his voice.

"What's it got to do with you?" snapped his father. "You've cut yourself adrift from it. You leave me now I am going down."

Grindley junior, not knowing what to say, put his arms round the little old man.

And in this way Tommy's brilliant scheme fell through and came to naught. Instead, old Grindley visited once again the big house in Nevill's Court, and remained long closeted with old Solomon in the office on the second floor. It was late in the evening when Solomon opened the door and called upstairs to Janet Helvetia to come down.

"I used to know you long ago," said Hezekiah Grindley, rising. "You were quite a little girl then."

Later, the troublesome Sauce disappeared entirely, cut out by newer flavours. Grindley junior studied the printing business—eventually became the printer and publisher of *Good Humour*.

THE COLLAPSIBLE CUP.

I TRAVELLED once with Great-Aunt Susan.
She has a cup for drinking;
She said it was collapsible;
I asked her why, and she replied:
"You'd better do some thinking."
But when I thought aloud, she cried:
"Shut up!"
Now, did she mean me or the cup?

FLORENCE WILKINSON.

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THE MILLINERY OF THE LAW.

By F. PAYLER.

WHETHER solicitors ought or ought not to wear their gowns in the minor courts is a question periodically raised and energetically discussed. One judge insists upon the form, another attaches no importance to it. Quite recently the action of Judge Shortt, in Brentford County Court, agitated the "lower branch" of the profession throughout the land. His Honour laid it down as an ultimatum that no ungowned solicitor must plead before him. Within a few days other county-court judges expressed an absolutely open mind on the subject. To the layman the solving of this little difference is of very little account. Provided he obtain justice, no question of professional attire troubles him. But there is a wider aspect of the subject of legal costume which has points of interest even to the layman. A most casual acquaintance with courts of law and equity suggests to the mind many problems which are not easily answered. On what principle does a judge wear a scarlet robe one day and a black one the next? How many robes has he, and how many wigs? By what subtle touch of dress is a King's Counsel to be distinguished from a member of the Junior Bar? Why does one barrister carry a blue bag and his neighbour a red one? These questions, and many of a like kind, present themselves to the untutored with puzzling monotony. To throw a little light on the subject is the modest object of this article.

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE IN FULL ROBES.

Of the ethics of the matter it is needless to say much. Even on the very low ground of personal appearances there is much to be said in favour of distinctive legal attire. The man in the street is impressed with anything which carries dignity, and, *nolens volens*, concedes to the wearer of distinguished dress intellectual attributes which may have little expression in more tangible ways. The wearer, too, possesses an incentive to moral elevation in knowledge of the fact that he carries the hall-mark of an honourable profession. From the day he pays his entrance guinea to his chosen Inn, the young law-student joyfully anticipates the time when the authoritative wig and gown will mark him out in open court.

Into these incipient visions there rarely enters the question of physical fitness for so conspicuous a dress, without which the quality of dignity is lost. Obviously, a clean-cut

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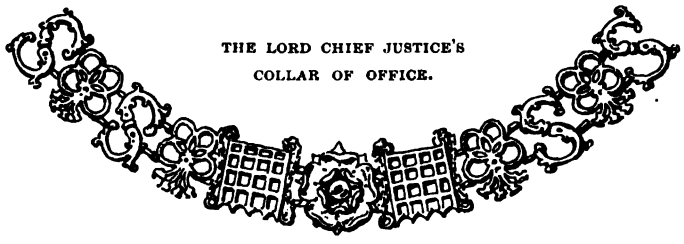
face and figure are demanded by this arbitrary covering if it is to fulfil its desired object. With very little tax on memory, instances can be recalled in which the begowned usher, who never heard of Chitty on Bills or Roberts on Wills, makes a much more imposing picture than is presented by some of the lawyers he waits upon. In this ephemeral dignity lies the principal value of the gown and the respect it commands. None know better than the members of the Bench and Bar themselves that they are at the mercy of an arbitrary dictator, whose favourable alliance may mean reputation, and often, what is its worldly equivalent, money. Wigs have been described as "grotesque ornaments, fit only for African chiefs." Grotesque they are when worn as some men wear them, obliquely tilted; but rightly placed, they give strength and authority to a clever face. So with gowns. Their folds and curves become an upright, manly bearing, but vulgarise the slovenly advocate whose robe hangs from his elbows instead of from his shoulders, as well as him who brooks tatters about his feet. People, malignant or envious, no doubt, have ascribed the partiality for a tattered gown to a fond hope by the wearer that his dishevelment will be regarded as the obverse of his wealth of practice, which leaves him no time for physical adornment. Such conclusions, however, if existent, are very rare, and never thoroughly convincing.



THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE'S COLLAR OF OFFICE.

Through tattered clothes small vices do appear;
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all.

But robes and gowns deficient in completeness are a poor cloak for a sorry coat and a mind unoccupied.

The wig has a wonderful pedigree. Specimens have been recovered from mummies of very ancient date. Hannibal, when doubtful of his allies in northern Italy, went amongst them disguised with perukes "suited to every age." But those were the ancestors of the wig which appertains to the stage, and not of the symbol of the law, which had a subsequent parent. The modern judicial and legal wig had its origin in the peruke and periwig of Charles the Second's time. Pepys hat he substituted for his own hair a periwig which cost him £3, and on going to church he found that it "did not prove so strange as he feared it would." Many have since endorsed his opinion, for despite its apparent thickness, the horsehair wig, if properly fitted and ventilated, is by no means uncomfortable. The real initiator of the full-bottomed wig was Louis XIV., and our own Queen Anne was its ardent patroness. Old prints recall the flowing character of the covering of those times. Addison speaks of a man who "held up his head with the most insipid serenity, and stroked the sides of a long wig that reached down to his middle."

But that was not the only form of wig then worn. "Full bottom tyes," "full bobs," "minister's bobs," "airey levants," "qu perukes," and "bagg wiggs," were all in the price-list of the peruke-makers. Right through the reigns of the first two Georges the wig was a common article of dress, and it was not until George III. was on the throne that it fell into disfavour. First the common people abandoned it, then military officers, and finally clergymen, leaving it the sole possession of the legal element. Archbishop Sumner was the last cleric to wear a wig in public, the occasion being the marriage of the Princess Royal, in 1858. How great a blow this change of taste and methods was to the trade of wig-making appears from the fact that even so late as the eighteenth century over thirty kinds of wigs were in use, amongst their curious descriptions being the "cut bob," the "detached buckle," the "wolf's paw," the "judge's ladder"—a reference to the symmetrical rows of curls on the judge's full-bottomed wig—the "long bob," the "pigeon's wing," the "wild boar's back," the "spinage seed," the "artichoke," and the "bag wig," the latter so-called because the lower part was enclosed in a silken bag which hung upon the shoulders. As the wig became more limited in use, those who retained it appear to have grown jealous of claimants to the distinction, for some of the older judges objected to the barristers of their time appearing in a head-dress which they declared, oblivious of their own appearance, to be "coxcombical." In modern times the tendency is in the direction of insisting upon

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the use of both wig and gown, and he would be a bold advocate who sought to plead in every-day attire without sufficient excuse. Only with a judge's sanction may a barrister plead bareheaded.

A judge of the High Court has two wigs in ordinary use—the full-bottomed, or full dress, and the tye, or undress. The former completely hides the head and hangs down in front on the breast. Its material is white horsehair, laboriously cleaned and curled, and woven with silk threads on a gauze foundation. The occasions when this is worn are strictly defined—indeed, the rules on this point are so abstruse that some judges are dependent for their due observance on the vigilance of their clerks. For instance, on the first day of Michaelmas term, which follows the Long Vacation, the full-bottomed wig is in evidence, while the tye wig does duty at the opening of Hilary, Easter, and Trinity terms. When the judges meet at the Old Bailey, when they dine with the Lord Mayor, when they attend *levées* and Drawing-rooms, when they attend at the House of Lords or at St. Paul's Cathedral, they don the flowing wig. Likewise it is their head-dress when opening an assize commission and charging a grand jury; but the moment these two latter functions are fulfilled, their Lordships retire and reappear in tye wigs. On the other hand, at State concerts and balls, at the Home Secretary's dinner, and at certain semi-State functions, no wig whatever is worn, possibly because its natural accompaniment, the robe, is also absent. Besides the Lord Chancellor, the Speaker of the House of Commons, and the judges of the High Court, the only persons entitled to wear a full-bottomed wig are King's Counsel. On their first public professional appearance after "taking silk"—namely, when sworn in before the Master of the Rolls—they figure in this new possession. They also adopt it at the Lord Chancellor's breakfast and reception which precede the opening of Michaelmas sittings; but when pleading, their invariable headgear is the frizzed wig, similar in every respect to that worn by the members of the Junior Bar. A barrister pays for his wig from five to eight guineas, the price varying with the quality of the material used. A uniform practice regulates the making of the frizzed wig, in that curls are ranged horizontally round it, and two loops hang in the neck. But different makers have their own notion as to how many curls there should be, and the number varies from twenty-seven to thirty-two. Most wigs have a perpendicular curl at the root of the loop, but many are without this artistic variation.

"STUFF" (BARRISTER).

BARRISTER.

Middle-aged persons will be able to recall a legal head-decoration which is quite unknown to the younger generation, simply because those entitled to wear it no longer exist as a branch of the legal profession. This is the *coif* of the serjeant-at-law. A peculiar, and not too honourable, origin is attached to the *coif*, which consisted of a small black patch worn on the crown of the wig. Its ancestry dates from the time when the clergy, by ecclesiastical veto, were forbidden to engage in any secular occupation. Deprived by this rule of the emoluments which engagements in courts of law, then quite common, provided, a certain number defied their superiors and continued to act, seeking disguise in a small white cap which hid the tonsure, or shaven part of the skull. Afterwards the colour was changed to black; and when the clerical advocate disappeared in favour of his legitimate successor, the serjeant-at-law, who held

"NONSENSE" (SOLICITOR).

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relative rank professionally and adopted the wig, the black cap gave place to a small black patch, which remained the distinctive mark of the serjeant up to his comparatively recent disappearance. Just as now there are many little distinctions in legal dress which puzzle the layman, so when the *coif* was worn there were those who did not appreciate its significance. In illustration of this a humorous story is related. During an assize at Stafford, a serjeant-at-law and a Queen's Counsel walking arm-in-arm in the vicinity of the courts, fully robed and wigged, attracted the attention of two working-men, between whom this conversation took place.

First working-man: "If you were in trouble, which one of those two tip-top 'uns would you have to defend you?"

Second working-man: "Well, I think I should pitch on that one," pointing to the Queen's Counsel.

First working-man: "Then you'd be a fool. The fellow with the sore head is worth six of t'other one."

It was never very easy to decide whether the serjeant-at-law or the Queen's Counsel held prior rank in the profession. Until Lord Chief Justice Cockburn granted them the unrestrained privilege, the serjeants were always relegated to the back rows of counsels' seats, amongst the junior barristers, unless they held a patent of precedence. Thus the Queen's Counsel and the serjeant holding a patent ranked equally, but the serjeant without a patent ranked as a connecting link between Queen's Counsel and the Junior Bar. So that a newly appointed Queen's Counsel came before an unpatented serjeant, however great his experience. Socially, however, the serjeant undoubtedly had the advantage, for he held distinct rank apart from his profession, which could not be claimed by the Queen's Counsel. In one other respect also the serjeant claimed a distinction which may or may not be considered of value. Besides the black silk gown which was common to them both, he possessed a scarlet gown for use at Guildhall banquets and the "churching" of the judges in Trinity term, and a purple gown for saints' days. In and out of term the Queen's Counsel was confined to black, and is so still under his new definition as King's Counsel.

The genealogy of robes is of much less concern and interest than their modern variation and import. While distinguishing the profession as a whole, they yet, in the purely pictorial sense. strangely operate to level down those in the profession. Between the ordinary black gown of the judge and that worn by the King's Counsel, the solicitor, the law student "eating dinners," and the menial usher, there is no visible distinction except in material. All have the plain, square-cut, sailor-like lapel or yoke. In the case of the judge and the King's Counsel the material is silk, and in other cases it is alpaca, or a stuff known as princetta. Hence the respective descriptions "stuff" and "silk." The stuff gown demands no greater outlay than two or three guineas. The main distinction in black robes is in the loose, square-cut collar described, and the pleated, fixed yoke of the junior barrister's gown. Both have one or two long ribands hanging down in front. These have been facetiously named "communication cords," from a supposed connection with an imaginary fee-bag hidden away somewhere in the inner recesses of the robe.

Besides his wig, robe, neck-bands, and brief-bag, the member of the Junior Bar has no personal impedimenta calculated to draw heavily upon his purse. It is different, however, when he "takes silk." He will then be cheaply let off with an added expenditure of a hundred guineas on outfit. Besides a full-bottomed wig and a silk robe, he has to provide himself with Court dress and the K.C.'s jacket and vest, the former having no lapels, and being ornamented with six or eight horizontal braids. "Weepers," or white gauze cuffs, to be worn outside the jacket sleeves when the Court is in mourning, are also a necessity. The stiff, white neckband, with its two protruding ends, is common to all in the profession. For ordinary use it has a narrow border all round, but for mourning a stripe down the centre in addition.

If a barrister who "takes silk" has cause to meditate on the expense his new dignity will put him to in respect of outfit, how much more so has the K.C. who is made a judge! Instead of a hundred guineas, five or six times that amount has to be expended, for the wardrobe of a judge—and by judge is meant a member of the Supreme Court of Judicature—approaches in extent that of a quick-change artiste. If his Lordship is attached to the King's Bench Division, he has at least five gowns—one of black silk for common use, another of black cloth trimmed with ermine, a tufted gown, a robe of scarlet cloth with ermine trimmings, and a purple or violet cloth robe trimmed with silk. He has, moreover, a girdle, a scarf, a

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TAKING SILK.

casting hood, a mantle, a black cap, a three-cornered hat, a beaver hat, a cocked hat, a silk hat, lace bands and ruffles, two full Court suits (one of cloth and one of velvet), including knee-breeches and silk stockings, shoes with steel buckles, shoes with black buckles, and shoes with gold buckles, a sword in steel scabbard, and a sword in black scabbard for State occasions when the Court is in mourning.

The Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice, and the Lord Justices of Appeal have a train to all robes, and the Lord Chief Justice wears a gold chain on all special occasions. So, likewise, does the President of the Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty Division. All these judges, moreover, have a black robe elaborately embroidered with gold. A Lord Chancellor's robe demands an outlay of about 150 guineas. Very early in Queen Victoria's reign it was the custom for legal dignitaries to attend Drawing-rooms in a figured damask silk gown, with lace bands and ruffles, and Thesiger is said to have spent £100 on bands alone. This practice, of course, does not obtain now; but as matters are, it is apparent that a sufficiently heavy tax has to be paid for the dignity of a judgeship. An off-hand remark made by Mr. Justice Ridley, at Chester Assizes, not long ago, clearly showed that nothing of inferior quality, even in the matter of stockings, enters the judicial wardrobe. The plaintiff in a breach of promise case handed in a list of articles purchased for her *trousseau*, which included "half-a-dozen pairs of black silk stockings, 27*s*." "That is cheap, is it not?" remarked his Lordship. "I pay half a guinea a pair."

Before the year 1635, robes were various and were worn indiscriminately, no uniform rule being observed. But subsequent to that year the judges appointed what should be worn at different times, and to this day the strictest regularity obtains. It is part of the qualification for the office of judge's clerk to know exactly what the occasion demands; or if the qualification does not exist on appointment, it is essential to acquire it speedily.

Patience and memory would be exhausted by an attempt to mention every single change which the puisne judge makes in his dress, but it may serve to remove a very natural and common idea that there is neither method nor rule in what is done, to mention those changes which affect conspicuous articles of costume, apart from the minutiæ, for these frequently puzzle the casual observer. On the first day of Michaelmas sittings, it has already been mentioned, their Lordships of the common law wear the scarlet robe. After the first day, however, they adopt the more sober black, trimmed with ermine, and

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this continues the every-day robe throughout the term, and also through the Hilary sittings. With the advent of Easter term, black gives place to purple, which remains in evidence all through Easter and Trinity terms. But an important qualification affects all the terms, for the invariable rule is to wear the scarlet robe on saints' days, and as there are some two dozen of these falling within the legal terms of a twelvemonth, the changes are pretty frequent. The other occasions on which scarlet is worn outside the Royal Courts of Justice are very numerous. The judges who sit at the Old Bailey always wear the scarlet robe, but while its trimming is ermine during Michaelmas and Hilary, it is silk during Easter and Trinity. The scarlet robe is also worn on circuit, at Guildhall banquets, at the swearing-in of the Lord Mayor, on the King's and Prince of Wales's birthdays, and at special ceremonies conducted in St. Paul's Cathedral, as well as in provincial cathedrals and churches. The black silk gown is almost confined, out of the Law Courts, to *levées*, when it hides a full Court suit of cloth; and the tufted gown is reserved for Drawing-rooms and special courts. At a Mansion House dinner, his Lordship appears in a velvet Court suit, cocked hat, and sword, precisely as at a State concert, the robe being entirely excluded. The sword-scabbard and the shoe-buckles, which are steel on ordinary occasions of this kind, change to black when the Court is in mourning. At Drawing-rooms, the buckles are gold. Frills and ruffles come to light of day at Drawing-rooms and the Home Secretary's dinner and State balls; the black cap—not the ill-omened cap which marks sentence of death—at the Old Bailey and the Guildhall functions; the three-cornered hat when on circuit; the cocked hat at State and semi-State gatherings; and the beaver hat at Drawing-rooms. Appellate and Chancery judges invariably wear a black gown in court.

KING'S BENCH, LIBEL, AND BREACH OF PROMISE.

ROBES OF THE HIGH COURT.

Barristers' bags are reserved for brief mention in conclusion, because, though conspicuous wherever the profession is in evidence, they are not articles of dress. The fact that they are blue or red does not strike the average man as of any significance, but even in this small accessory there is evidence of etiquette and regularity. When called to the Bar, the barrister furnishes himself with a blue bag, and if he conform with practice will remain faithful to it until some King's Counsel who has "led" him presents him with a red one. Thus a red bag denotes that its owner has, in however humble a way, won his spurs.

WIGS IN THE MAKING.

By Alder Anderson.

Leading out of the south-east corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields, there is—or, rather, was, for pick and shovel have been diligently at work on the spot of late—a quiet thoroughfare of severely respectable legal aspect, in strict harmony with all else in the neighbourhood; it terminated in Carey Street, name of ill-omen to the modern trader. Here stood, until a few weeks ago, when it was demolished with adjoining buildings to make way for the new Land Registry Office, a house known as No. 8, Serle Street, to which belonged the distinction of being the last house in the City of Westminster; but the ordinary man would rather have been arrested by the knowledge that it was in this very house, nearly two centuries ago, that Thomas Ravenscroft set up in business as a maker of perukes.

COURT OF ARCHES.

Thomas Ravenscroft was a member of an old Cheshire family that can trace its unbroken descent back to the year 809, more than two hundred years before William of Normandy and his brother robbers were heard of. The shop was barely opened, in the early years of the eighteenth century, before it became a rendezvous for all the fops of the town. An elegantly curled peruke was the most indispensable part of the "compleat" beau's attire, and Ravenscroft's assistance and advice were invoked by all who could afford to pay. The judges and barristers had assumed the wearing of wigs as a distinctive mark of their office in the year 1670, about fifty years previous to Ravenscroft's setting up in business, and from the first, the legal element formed a notable part of the Serle Street *clientèle*.

Hogarth's drawing, "The Five Orders of

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IV.

I. (Centre drawing).—Appeal: Full dress of black and gold.

IV.—Nisi Prius: Purple cloth with puce silk facings and scarlet stole, for Easter and Trinity terms.

II.—The scarlet and ermine full dress of King's Bench for Assize.

V.—Nisi Prius: Black trimmed with ermine; scarlet stole, for Michaelmas and Hilary terms.

II.

III.

III.—The black and ermine usually worn in the King's Bench Court.

VI.—Probate and Divorce: Black silk and full wig.

V.

VI.

ROBES OF THE HIGH COURT.

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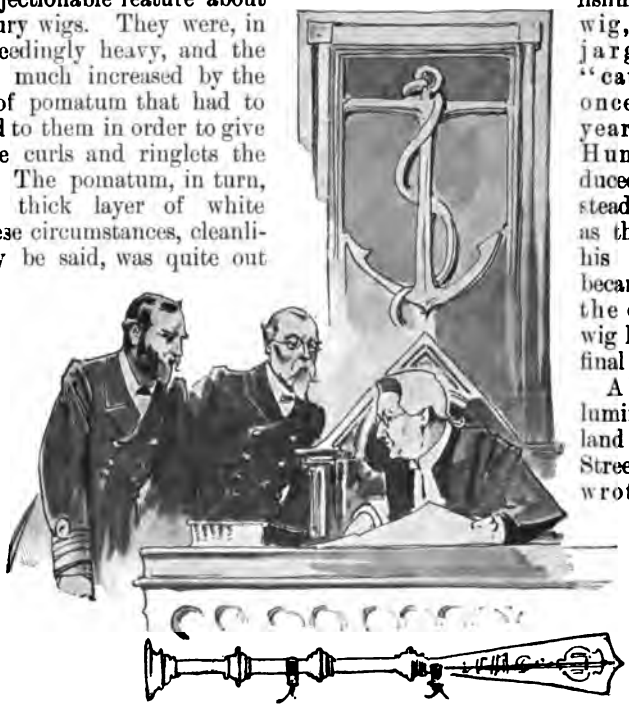
Periwigs," for the models in which the artist was indebted to Thomas Ravenscroft, now hangs in an honourable position on the walls at the new address of the firm in Star Yard, which is, to all intents and purposes, a most interesting museum of legal lore.

During the last century, wigs, whether legal or otherwise, were most expensive articles, often costing as much as fifty guineas. They were made exclusively of human hair, the great demand for which far exceeded the supply and made the price almost prohibitive. The high cost, however, was not the only objectionable feature about the eighteenth-century wigs. They were, in the first place, exceedingly heavy, and the original weight was much increased by the enormous quantity of pomatum that had to be constantly applied to them in order to give the artistically made curls and ringlets the proper consistence. The pomatum, in turn, was covered by a thick layer of white powder. Under these circumstances, cleanliness, it need hardly be said, was quite out of the question. Apart from this, however, the intervention of the periwig-maker was absolutely necessary at least once a week, to keep such elaborate structures in anything like decent trim.

Still, in spite of all these drawbacks, the wig might have endured in its old form until the present day—since England has for many years led the way in all that appertains to masculine attire—had not Pitt placed a very high duty on hair-powder, which enormously increased its cost. The world of periwig-makers was in consternation. The judges, and still more vehemently, the barristers, protested loudly against the new tax, but, of course, in vain. Someone has sung of the great effects that from little causes spring. The obnoxious impost on hair-powder provided Humphry Ravenscroft, the grandson of Thomas Ravenscroft the First, with the great opportunity of his lifetime. He had long been meditating the production of a wig for his legal clients, in which the curls might be fixed by some mechanical means, that would render the wearer independent of the hairdresser's constant aid. In 1822, he took out a patent for "making a forensic wig, the curls whereof are constructed on a principle to supersede the necessity for curling, frizzing, or using hard pomatum, and for forming the curls in a way not to be uncurled; and also for the tails of the wig not to require tying in dressing; and, further, the impossibility of any person untying them."

This patent contained the principle of the "fixed" wig, which is still to be obtained nowhere else but at the Ravenscroft establishment. The new wig, as modern jargon has it, "caught on" at once, and a few years later, when Humphry introduced horsehair instead of human hair as the material for his specialities, it became clear that the old powdered wig had received its final quietus.



THE ANCHOR AND SILVER OAR, NAVAL ACCESSORIES OF THE ADMIRALTY COURT.

All the legal luminaries of the land flocked to Serle Street and eagerly wrote themselves down as "subscribers" for the new wig that was to displace the filthy instrument of torture they had put up with for so long. The book in which the signatures were entered is jealously guarded, and, with its three successors, ranks among the most valuable treasures in the Ravenscroft museum. The four volumes are practically an epitome of the legal history of last century. Wigs are not purchases that are made every day. There are seldom more than three occasions in the life of a lawyer when he buys a wig—when he is called to the Bar, when he takes silk, and when he is raised to the Bench. The majority of barristers, alas! have only to buy a wig once! Whether it is once or thrice, however, the purchaser almost invariably complies with tradition—

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K.C. King's Bench. Recorder. Appeal. King's Bench. Attorney-General.

Mace-Bearer. Lord Chancellor. Purse-Bearer.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR'S RECEPTION AT THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

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for lawyers are ever great sticklers for "precedent"—and enters his signature when he gives the order. Here, for instance, is a page of signatures of newly fledged lawyers. Which among them will blossom into "the eminent King's Counsel" or "the most learned judge"? Turn over a few pages. Now and then your eye will catch two or three of the signatures you had read first. The writers have signalled themselves from their fellows; they have been made King's Counsels, and have ordered fresh wigs to celebrate their new dignities. Again skip a certain number of leaves, and you come across a signature for the third time—the writer has attained the height of legal ambition. He is a judge of the land. Should the signature occur a fourth time, it probably means that the ordinary bourn of human ambition has been surpassed; the writer may be Lord Chancellor, Speaker of the House of Commons—who knows what, in fact?

The four volumes of signatures are by no means the only objects of interest in the museum. The walls are literally hidden by portraits of all those who have left a great name behind them as dispensers of the law of England. Most of the portraits bear the autograph signature of the persons represented. The series of Lord Chancellors is led off by Lord Somers, who died in 1697; of Lord Chief Justices, by Lord Raymond, 1725. Here are Brougham and Erskine, pleading at the trial of Queen Caroline; here, Sir Fitzroy Kelly; and, coming nearer to our own days, Lord Selborne (a staunch friend of the Ravenscrofts) and Lord Chief Justice Cockburn. The latter, who had a most rooted aversion to giving a complimentary signature to anyone, broke his rule at once when he learned where the portrait was to hang. The celebrated petrified wig of Lord Erskine also figures in the Ravenscroft museum. While on a visit to Knaresborough in 1802, Erskine took it into his head to see what effect the waters of the dripping well in the neighbourhood would have on his wig. The schoolboy persists, sometimes, even under the gravest-looking legal forehead! The result far exceeded expectations; the wig became as hard as stone, and absolutely unsuitable thenceforth for any other function in life but to figure as a curiosity under a glass case in the great lawyer's library. Later on, it came into the possession of Lord Westbury, and at the sale of the latter's effects, on his death, was purchased by Mr. Ravenscroft and restored to its place of birth in Serle Street.

To be initiated by Mr. Ernest Ravenscroft, great-great-grandson of Thomas Ravenscroft the First, into the mysteries of judicial wig-making, is to gain an instructive peep into one of those industries—too rare, alas! to-day—that depend for their continued existence on the constant, watchful, and almost tender personal supervision at every stage of one guiding spirit. Wig-making, as practised by the Ravenscrofts, is one of the very few handicrafts that it seems impossible machinery can spoil. Everything is carried out by hand. Hair by hair, huge bundles of horsehair are carefully examined, only the finest and purest hairs being delicately picked out with unerring eye and laid on one side, one by one. From a bundle weighing a hundredweight, it sometimes happens that not more than half a pound passes this preliminary test. The small heap of selected hairs having been again and again weeded out, those that remain are finally done up into little packets, each hair in which is of precisely the same length and shade. After this, the cleaning process commences, strong hand-brushes being used, until, at last, the immaculate purity of the hair is unimpeachable. Small wisps of the cleaned hair are then rolled very tightly round short, round pieces of wood, about the thickness of an ordinary penholder, and securely fastened. The rolls are now thrown into a vat of boiling water and boiled for the space of an hour or so. At the end of that time they are taken out and dried, and when they are drawn off the wood, the hair is found to have acquired a permanent curl. To impart to the wigs something of the aspect of the old powdered wigs, a little black hair is artfully intermingled with the white, the proportion being about one to five. The curls, having been sewn by women on to very narrow silk ribbons, pass on into the hands of skilled and specialist workmen, who arrange them in the manner consecrated by tradition, and complete the wigs, the final artistic touches being put by Mr. Ravenscroft himself, who had, in the first place, picked out the hair.

The longevity of a well-made wig is remarkable. The Ravenscrofts recently received a letter from a member of the judicial Bench at the Antipodes, informing them that a wig which the writer had worn for twenty-five years—from the day of his call to the Bar, in fact—was still in perfect condition, and had just entered upon a second career on the head of a junior member of the Australian Bar.

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RECEPTION OF THE LORD MAYOR BY THE KING'S BENCH.

PASSING SENTENCE OF DEATH IN THE BLACK CAP.

For the last hundred and fifty years every Speaker of the House of Commons, including Mr. Gully, the present occupant of the Chair, was a willing tributary to the house in Serle Street. As a rule, Speakers appear to pay a good deal of attention to their wig, realising, no doubt, what an important adjunct it is to their dignity. One of their number, whose memory is much cherished by the house of Ravenscroft, even went so far as to provide himself with an entirely new head-covering every twelve months; but such prodigality as this is extremely rare.

Barristers, on the other hand, have often the same horror of a smart new wig as the young blood at the 'Varsity has of cap and gown that are unmutilated. In both cases, it is the fear of being taken for new-comers that probably is the cause of this attitude. Certain members of the Bar, and not among the least distinguished, carry this affectation to great lengths. Not content with being the proud possessors of dilapidated wigs, they wear them by preference awry, and as if under protest. The layman who finds himself by accident in the courts often fails to appreciate the subtle reasons that prompt such a course, and is inclined to ingenuously approve rather the aspect of those barristers who wear neatly curled wigs of the shape best suited to their respective physiognomies, who look, in fact, as if their wigs formed part and parcel of their heads.

BOUQUET PLACED AT THE JUDGE'S SIDE AT THE OPENING OF ASSIZES, AND CARRIED BY THE JUDGE WHEN ATTENDING CHURCH.

WHITE GLOVES GIVEN TO THE JUDGE WHEN THERE IS A CLEAN CALENDAR.

One of the features that most surprise the outsider brought into immediate contact for the first time with the judge's wig is its extreme

lightness. The full-bottomed wig, in spite of its long flaps and multitudinous ringlets, weighs no more than five ounces, while the average weight of a barrister's wig is only two and a quarter ounces. The cost of the former is twelve guineas, and of the latter five and six guineas. When you have seen the long, careful process of fabrication, and the many hands it passes through, your only surprise is that the price is not far more.

Nowadays, lawyers are, of course, the principal clients of the Ravenscroft establishment, but they are run very hard by coachmen. On all great State occasions it is considered *de rigueur* for coachmen to wear the old-fashioned head-covering, and the Ravenscrofts' ledger is practically a recapitulation of the British Peerage. It is a significant fact, too, and one of those minor ways in which that impalpable quantity known as a nation's "prestige" becomes a valuable asset, that the custom is spreading to the Continent. When King Edward, the peace-maker, paid the first of that historical round of visits last year, the Portuguese Court, in order to do honour to their guest, decided to put all the coachmen into curly, white wigs, and no less than forty-four of these aids to dignity were despatched in hot haste to Lisbon from Star Yard.

On its removal from Serle Street, the Ravenscroft firm joined forces with Messrs. Ede and Son, who have been long identified with the making of the various robes that complete the transformation of the mere man into the lawyer of one degree or another. The outward signs of that transformation are therefore appropriately produced nowadays from the combined resources of Messrs. Ede, Son, and Ravenscroft, at their headquarters in Star Yard, and at 93–94, Chancery Lane.

On leaving the Ravenscroft museum and all its memories, it is difficult to avoid making comparisons between this line of conscientious craftsmen, stretching for five generations from father to son, and some of those celebrated artisans of a buried past, whose names, whether they were potters or cathedral-builders or violin-makers, stand for everything that is excellent in honest workmanship.

Mr. Walter Wilson has here illustrated the chief features of "The Millinery of the Law" with drawings that are sufficiently explained by their titles, save in the case of the series depicting the taking of "Silk." The first of these shows the new K.C. in all the bravery of new silk gown, full-bottomed wig, breeches and stockings, and low shoes, seated within the bar, at the invitation of a judge. "Do you move, Mr. —— ?" queries the judge, and the new K.C. rises and bows in turn to the Bench, to the Senior Bar, and to the Junior Bar, who return the bow, standing. The new K.C. then rises and goes to the next court for the same formalities. For this ceremony he has been wearing the full Court dress already mentioned; but before he is permitted to address the court, he must cast off his long wig, don the short curls of the barrister, and cover his stockinged legs with trousers. This "quick change" usually takes place between the swing-doors of the court

TRUMPETS AND JAVELINS PRECEDING A JUDGE ON CIRCUIT.

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THE HINS' HOUSEKEEPER.

By JANE BARLOW.*

WHATEVER may be said about names in general, there is certainly something in a nickname, and I have known places where an account of how this or that one originated would throw much light upon local history. But here I will only relate how a very insignificant inhabitant of a very insignificant hamlet came to be known among her neighbours as the Hins' Housekeeper.

Biddy M'Gowran felt herself to be a person of no small importance when her grandmother had set off to market and she could contemplate her morning's work. She expected to be extremely busy, and well she might, as her task was nothing less than the "readying up" of their kitchen, which she rightly thought in bad need of such an operation. The mistake she made was assuming that it could be satisfactorily performed by the hands and wits of a seven-year-old.

Biddy had arrived at Rathcroskery only the day before, having hitherto lived with her other grandmother in a gate-lodge a long way off. Her parents had always been dead, it seemed to her, though her grandmother did talk as if the trouble had happened quite a short time ago.

The gate-lodge she had just left was a highly ornamental one, with a little terrace of coloured tiles round it, and stained glass in the Gothic windows, and all things about is were kept very spick and span. A girl came up from the village once a week to wash and scrub, and whatever could be polished was polished, and whatever could not be was dusted, every day.

Why this Rathcroskery grandmother, whom she had seldom seen, should have come to fetch her away, Biddy did not know; but as she was told that she should return by and by, she started happily enough, while little old Mrs. Nolan stood under the porch, shaking her head sorrowfully in the cold March sunlight.

On their journey to Rathcroskery, her new Granny, as Biddy called her, had spoken much about her son Larry, Biddy's poor father, who, she said, had been the best son in Ireland, and the finest figure of a young man in the County Mayo. Whereas old Granny had often talked of her daughter little Molly, Biddy's mother, who used to be the prettiest girl in five parishes, and the best daughter that ever lived in this world—God be good to them all!

"And a grand worker poor Larry was," Mrs. M'Gowran had repeated more than once; "ne'er a lazy bone had he in his body, I'll say that for him."

This phrase stuck in Biddy's mind, and it was chiefly a wish to prove herself a worthy daughter of such an industrious father that made her so eager to set about doing something without delay. But there were other reasons, too. She was really shocked at the grimy aspect of the kitchen, as far as she could see it, for perpetual twilight dwelt behind the two tiny windows with their beetle-brows of sloping thatch.

The state of the floor struck her particularly; it felt gritty and rough underfoot, as if encrusted with dry mud. Biddy wondered how it could have got into such a condition; the scrubbing girl, she conjectured, might not have come, so that Granny had nobody to help her except Grandfather and Uncle Joe, who, of course, were not of any use—at all events, indoors.

Biddy often had thought, as she watched Meg Hoey working at home, that it must be very delightful to have command of a bucket filled with foaming suds, and a piece of soap for the making of more, besides a cloth and a brush, and liberty to splash and slop all over the shiny tiles or snowy boards. But Meg always refused to let her try, on the ground that she would be only destroying her clean frock and delaying other people.

All this somehow made it now seem quite clear to Biddy that she should set about cleaning up as soon as ever she had the house to herself, and thus be able to surprise her grandparents with the improvement upon their return. She had indeed already surprised her grandmother slightly by the alacrity with which she agreed that the walk to market was too far, and her vehemence

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in declaring that she would not be a bit lonesome by herself until her grandfather came in to his dinner, at one o'clock.

So Mrs. M'Gowran started on her long trudge, reflecting that poor Larry's little girl seemed to be a good, biddable child; her husband went off with Joe to their field-work, having told Biddy that she was the grandest little housekeeper at all; and Biddy found herself at last happily alone.

"Biddy did not see that three small children had come along the road and stopped to look on."

Biddy's first requirements were some water and a bucket, and she had the good fortune to find them both at once, in the shape of a battered old zinc pail, nearly full, standing at the back door. She resolved to be content with cold water, for the black, soot-shagged kettle on the hearth was nearly as big as herself, and she had sense enough not to try lifting it. Brush and cloth must next be sought; but here Biddy had less luck, as no traces of the former appeared anywhere, and the nearest approach to the latter that she lit upon was a blue-checked linen fabric lying folded on the window seat. It was quite evidently an apron; however, since there were two rather large holes in it, she gladly decided that it could be good for nothing except a floor-cloth; and when she had torn it across to make it a more convenient size, it certainly did look like nothing better than a rag.

Then, after a long and anxious quest, she found, in a broken teapot on the dresser, a piece of soap disappointingly thin. Still, it would do, she thought, and she dropped it into the bucket, intending to stir up a lather with the poker as soon as it had melted sufficiently.

While she waited for this, she had leisure to notice that two grey hens and a white one were crawking dismally in a row on top of the half-door. She had closed it to exclude them, being much scandalised at their free and easy entrances. Poultry were never permitted to set scratching foot near the trim flower-beds about the Castle gate-lodge, so Biddy had no experience of fowls and their habits; but she felt pretty sure that three hens would not keep up such a disconsolate

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"'*Washin' up*, I was,' Biddy said, still with some pride."

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noise, like the winding of the old wheezy eight-day clock at home, unless they wanted something very badly; and she quickly guessed this something to be their breakfast. Granny had most likely forgotten to feed them in the hurry of setting off to market.

What their usual food was, Biddy could not tell, but during her researches she had espied, on a shelf under the dresser, a large loaf of bread, which seemed to her suitable fare. The loaf, being stale and not well kneaded, fell in two as she lifted it out, making it all the easier to break and crumble up.

As she flung the white flakes thickly into the middle of the road, the fowls gathered so speedily into so numerous a flock that Biddy thought: "Granny must own a power of hins"; and well she might think so, for she was entertaining unawares any of the neighbours' "chuckens" who could arrive fast enough, half flying, half running headlong, to share in this public feast.

Watching and supplying their quarrelsome meal, and wishing the big loaf yet bigger, for it was vanishing like snow in a rapid thaw, Biddy did not see that three small children, with ragged lesson-books and a grey stuff bag, had come along the road and stopped to look on.

These were her cousins, Pat M'Gowran's children, on their way to school; but Biddy the stranger knew of no such people. After a while, "Is it throwin' all her good bread to the hins you are?" inquired the taller of the little girls, who was some sizes shorter than Biddy. The sudden question startled Biddy, but as she considered it an impertinence, she did not answer, and continued to scatter the crumbs. Presently, "Gimme the heel of the loaf," said the fat little boy; "it's a nice crusty bit"; and he held out a hand.

"Indeed and I will not," Biddy said, twisting the tough crust. "I've got little enough for the poor hins as it is." Thereupon he tried to snatch it with a jump; but she flung it into the very centre of the bobbing heads, and withdrew empty-handed behind the half-door.

"Come on out of that, Lizzy and Willy," said the elder little girl. "We'll be late, and she's a cross one." So they trotted away down the road.

There was now nothing to hinder Biddy from beginning her great task immediately, and she set to work with much zeal on a patch near the door, where she fancied that the floor looked grimiest. At first she thought she was making good progress, because as she scrubbed away, the blue cloth grew so very black and dirty that it seemed as if she must soon come upon something underlying smooth and clean, white boards or gay-coloured tiling. But this did not happen. The more she rubbed and wrung out her wet cloth, the worse matters looked, and in one place quite a perceptible hollow appeared. If such an extraordinary thing had been possible, she would really have believed that the floor was turning into mud. She was feeling much perplexed and distressed, and had already splashed herself all over, when a sudden blot of shadow made her glance up to see the doorway darkened. It was by two girls, elder sisters of her late visitors, and they stood staring curiously in at her. Neither of them spoke to her, but they whispered to each other loudly with giggles.

"Herself's off marketin', I suppose. Look-a, Fan, that's the young one she said she was fetchin' home."

"Glory be to goodness! what's she doin' at all? After spillin' the bucket of water she is, and wipin' it up."

"A quare bad offer she's makin' at it, then. And I declare now, it's one of Granny's blue aprons she's got wisped up there ruinated."

These remarks so exasperated Biddy that she found courage to say, copying Meg Hoey's manner as closely as she could: "If I was anybody else, and if I came gapin' at a person doin' a bit of work, I'd stand out of the light and mind me own business, and not be delayin' other people."

Her rebuke seemed to amuse the girls vastly, which was disagreeable. However, they went away directly, which was a relief. "Come along, Minnie," Fan said. "We ought to be there by now. Och! but it's the comical, ould-fashioned thing!"

As the sound of their laughter receded, Biddy determined to prevent all such annoying intrusions by shutting the front door, and in her haste to do so she overset the bucket, which sent wedges of water shooting out on every side. Then while she struggled desperately with the stiff latch, a young man came sauntering by, and stopped to give it the necessary shove and shake, partly from good-nature, partly for occupation. He wore labourer's clothes, but so far had done nothing to-day except whistle on the bank a bit down the road. "Is Mrs. M'Gowran widin?" said this Matt Caffrey. "Ah, no,

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to be sure, it's at market she is. And so you're keepin' the house, and after spillin' the sup of water? Well, now, that's too bad."

"*Washin' up*, I was," Biddy said, still with some pride.

"Bedad, were you?" said Matt. "It's the first I ever heard tell of washin' up a mud floor. Maybe if you have e'er a drop of water left in it, you might take a turn at the road out here. There's scarce a puddle on it at all, and you've plinty of them inside." Biddy's eyes widened with consternation as she began to perceive how much worse than useless her efforts had been.

"But sure there's no great harm done," Matt added, seeing her dismayed look. "I'll show you the way it can be set to rights soon enough, if that's all that ails you."

He stepped indoors, and picking up a large iron turf-shovel, thrust it into the hottest corner of the fire, whence he presently drew it out turned glowing red. This he held steadily, as a careful laundress tests her heated flat-irons, low over a wet patch on the floor, which at once began to yield up its superfluous moisture in pale mists of steam. He repeated the process several times, till Biddy, standing by, saw things underfoot grow reassuringly firm and dry.

"There—a fly wouldn't aisy wet the tips of his toes on it now. You might be layin' out the table for dinner, ag'in the others come in," said Matt, who surmised that she was wishing to wield the heavy, scorching shovel, "and they'll find everythin' grand."

"True for you," said Biddy, and darted over to the dresser. But in a minute she emerged from among its deep bottom shelves with a mortified air. "I made sure I seen another loaf sittin' in there," she said, "and it's only an ould white bowl."

"Was it there you got the one you were throwin' to the chuckens a while ago?" said Matt; "for you may depind she had it keepin' for breakfast to-morra. They do mostly have a bit of baker's bread of a Sunday mornin'."

At this, Biddy looked more alarmed than she knew. "Well, she can be gettin' another one before that, I s'pose," she said in an unconcerned tone.

"Meanwhile Biddy's grandmother and her husband were on their way home through the village."

But Biddy suddenly slid down into depths of despair. "Och! what'll I do at all? Sure, how could I tell it was the only one she had? And the hins was starvin' wid the hunger, and fluttherin' in at the door like aigles."

"Whisht-a-whisht, there's a jewel," Matt said soothingly; "sure, I wouldn't be tormintin' anybody. You made a fine offer at it, considerin'. And as for the loaf, we must conthrive one way or another. Just be washin' the face and hands of you, that are a trifle black or so," he said, "and I'll be

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back again wid somethin' in a couple or two of minyits."

Matt had not far to go, and he trotted briskly, so that he very soon did return with nothing less than a portly loaf. But he found the kitchen empty; and through the open back door sounded doleful cries. "Murther alive! What's took her now?" he said, setting down the loaf and running out.

Biddy had taken Matt's advice, being indeed extremely muddy, and had gone with a jug to the small stream. There, stooping over the water, she lost her footing on the slippery grass and went splash in. It was quite shallow, and she might easily have scrambled up the bank if she had not got into such a panic that she could only hold on to the edge and scream.

Matt pulled her out, dripping. "Well, now," said he, "it's the unlucky day wid you entirely. But the jug's only cracked, and that's somethin', anyway. And I'll just bring you in to me sisther yonder and see if she can get you dried." So he conducted her along the stream, past two or three cabin doors, till he came to one where a good-humoured young woman was standing at a tub.

"Here's a little girl from Mrs. M'Gowran's, Bessie," he said to her, "after drowndin' herself fetchin' water; and the others are all away, so I thought you might maybe set her to rights."

And Mrs. Bessie said: "Mercy on us all, and more too, the little crathur's dreeped! Why, to be sure, I can borry her a loan of Sally's Sunday frock till I give them muddy things a rinse in the tub here wid me wash."

Meanwhile Biddy's grandmother and her husband, who was helping her with some parcels, were on their way home through the village. As they passed the schoolhouse, about which the children were playing, Willie, Ellen, and Lizzie rushed up to them eagerly with news.

"Och, Granny! do you know what the cross girl at your place is after doin'? She's broke up your big loaf and threw it out to the hins."

"The bould little thing!" Mrs. M'Gowran said in high vexation.

She flounced on, so much perturbed that she forgot to produce the sugarsticks she had brought from market for the tale-bearers, who were thus justly punished.

A little further on she met Fan and Minnie, and was greeted with—

"There's fine destruction up at your place, Granny. Poor Uncle Larry's daughter has the floor all swimmin' in says of water, and she's tore your blue apron to wipe it up wid. And the show she is herself wid mud and dirt is a sight to behould. And your loaf——"

"I'm to be pitied wid the likes of her, the dear knows," said their grandmother, hurrying on faster still, with Fan and Minnie following to see what would happen. But when they arrived, there stood the table in the middle of a dry floor, and on it glimmered a large white loaf.

"What romancin' at all had you, then?" Mrs. M'Gowran said, turning her wrath on the two girls. "There's nought amiss wid the floor; and she needn't ha' meddled wid the loaf to be lavin' it out, but it's right enough. Shoo! you ould baste! I wonder where the child is herself?"

Here Matt put his head in at the door.

"Matt, avic," said Mrs. M'Gowran, "might you happen to ha' seen little Biddy runnin' about anywheres outside there?"

"I seen her," Matt said rather solemnly; "and, bedad, now, the last time I seen her it's as near as anythin' she was drowndin' herself dead, the crathur, sthrivin' to fetch you in a jug of clane wather you might be wantin' when you come home. Och, no, ma'am! she isn't hurted, glory be to goodness! Me sisther's just givin' her a dry at her fire, and she'll bring her along directly. 'Twould be a pity of anythin' happenin' her, for there isn't a finer-lookin' child in the parish. She favours you oncommon, ma'am."

Sure enough, Matt's sister immediately appeared, leading Biddy, in a clean pink cotton frock. But at this moment, Fan, who had been poking the loaf, triumphantly announced a discovery. "It isn't your one at all, Granny. Scaldin' hot it is, just out of the oven like, instead of bein' stale."

"Blathers, Fan M'Gowran! hers it is," Matt said, and paused, divided between a wish to screen Biddy and to make known his own generosity. Biddy, however, settled the question herself. "There wasn't e'er a bit of anythin' else to be givin' the hins, and the feathers of them was standin' on end wid the hunger. And the strange man said he'd bring another."

"Well, well," said Mrs. M'Gowran, who was mollified by relief from several scares, "she isn't of a size to have over-much sinse yit awhile."

"And the hins wouldn't find fault wid her housekeepin', anyway," said her husband. "'Deed, now, she was a grand housekeeper——for the hins."

Thus Biddy M'Gowran got her nickname, and the "Hins' Housekeeper" she continued to be for many a long year.

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THE GARDEN OF LIES.

By JUSTUS MILES FORMAN,*

Author of "Journeys End," "Cupid's House Party," etc.

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—Denis Mallory, a reckless but chivalrous young Irishman, living in Paris, is suddenly involved in a strange chain of circumstance through having, quite light-heartedly, undertaken to impersonate the reigning Prince of Novodnia, at the request of the doctor who is treating the young Princess for loss of memory. The Prince has but lately come to the throne of Novodnia, as the result of an extraordinary series of deaths. So improbable has his succession previously been considered that he has been allowed to marry outside royal circles, and is now the husband of an American girl of great beauty and considerable wealth. On his accession to the throne, the Prince's supporters in his faction-ridden kingdom become anxious about the succession. His wife not being of royal rank, no child of hers could succeed to the throne. The Prince, however, resolutely refuses to divorce the Princess Eleanor, and one result of his loyalty to her is that while he is obliged to remain in Novodnia to meet and combat intrigue and faction of various kinds, his beautiful wife is living in Paris under the care of the great brain-specialist, Sir Gavin MacKenzie. The marriage of the Prince with Eleanor took place in America, and it was on the way from the church that a carriage accident caused the injuries which kept the Princess still in a state of unconsciousness when, a fortnight later, the Prince was called home to Novodnia to ascend the throne. The Princess has now recovered her bodily health, but without regaining any memory of recent events, even her own marriage being unknown to her. On learning of her marriage, the Princess demands to see her husband, and imagines a conspiracy to keep him from her. Indeed, she inquires for him so persistently that the doctors fear for her reason unless he comes to her. This, of course, is impossible, and the position is so critical that it is decided by Colonel Von Altdorf, Chancellor of Carlo III., Creighton, who tells the story, and Sir Gavin MacKenzie, to introduce Denis Mallory to Eleanor as her husband; and just as the young couple are really falling in love with one another, news arrives that the Prince is on his way to Paris to claim his wife. Prince Carlo loves his wife so dearly that though he is told of the deception that has been practised in order to preserve his wife's reason, he is overcome with jealousy on seeing Mallory and Eleanor together in the garden. He creates a violent scene, which leads to a duel between himself and Denis. Both are good swordsmen, but Denis Mallory eventually disarms the Prince, who falls fainting, but unwounded, to the ground.

CHAPTER VIII.

COLONEL VON ALTDORF was holding his head with one arm and forcing brandy from a little glass between his teeth. Young Mallory sat upon the edge of the divan, holding one of the limp hands and chafing it between his own. MacKenzie and I hovered near with anxious faces.

The Prince lay silent for a long time after his senses had come to him again, eyes closed and limbs motionless. Then at last he rose, a bit unsteadily, to his feet and went to the window that overlooked the garden, where he stood gazing out upon the trees, again for a long time. He had raised a protesting hand when Von Altdorf would have spoken, so that we all stood silent, waiting.

When he turned back into the room, there was no more passion to be seen upon his face, no more of the furious tempest of rage that had so lately shaken him. His head drooped and the flush in his cheeks seemed of honest shame.

He went over to young Denis Mallory and held out his hand.

"I did you a great wrong, sir," said the Prince in a low voice. "I put a shameful insult upon you; and though you might have killed me in the fight I forced, you would not. You have shamed me more than any man. I ask your pardon and your hand. I wronged you."

"Why, sir!" cried Denis Mallory, his own face flushing crimson—"why, sir, you unman me! I should not have fought at all, for no man may be held accountable for his words when anger carries him beyond reason. You more than make amends, sir."

The Prince dropped upon a chair beside the table and leaned his head upon one hand. He seemed still weary and faint with exhaustion.

"I owe you, gentlemen all," said he, "a debt I can never repay for your care of the person and health of the Princess Eleanor. From Sir Gavin MacKenzie and from Von Altdorf here I had a right to expect all they

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could perform; but as for you two gentlemen, M. Mallory and M. Creighton, upon whom I had not the least claim, I cannot express my obligation. Your plan was no doubt the best one that could be made. It is a pity, now that I am so soon in Paris, that it was put into effect, for it was a desperate make-shift that will require desperate remedies and a terrible shock to Madame; but you could not have known I was coming."

"Ah! why did you come, sir?" groaned Von Altdorf. "Why did you come? It was madness to leave the country at such a time! Aren't those dogs waiting with their tongues out, to snap at your seat, once you're out of it? Isn't Georgias sleeping with his clothes on up in the hills over Novodni, waiting to gobble the city? And hasn't he a rabble of bandit swine to back him? Ah, sir! it was madness to come here now!"

The Prince shook his head at him with a little, whimsical smile.

"You're a hard taskmaster, Von Altdorf," said he—"hard as Fate; and, by my faith! I'm weary of that lady. She drives, Von Altdorf, she never beguiles. Man, man, am I to be all Prince and never husband? Am I a machine, Colonel? Shall I love a throne better than my wife who's in danger?"

Von Altdorf pulled at his moustache.

"I wasn't thinking of you, sir, nor of what you love," said he bluntly. "I was thinking of Novodnia. I served your father, sir, and I serve you. I'm ready to do your will at my life's cost, but your will against your welfare and the welfare of your house I'll oppose with all my strength. No Pavelovitch, no Russian cat's-paw, shall sit in Novodni if I can prevent it. I serve the Prince, sir, not the man, when the two go separate ways."

"A hard taskmaster," said the Prince, smiling still a bit sadly, "hard as Fate. You've brains where your heart should be, Von Altdorf."

"I've loyalty to my country there," growled Von Altdorf. "And look you, sir, we've a question to face—or shall have soon, now that Madame is assured of recovery and must soon be told that she is your wife. What's to be done?"

"Why, seat her by my side in Novodni! What else?" said the Prince.

"You know the popular attitude in Novodnia towards that, sir," observed Von Altdorf. "Is your seat so firm under you that you can afford to alienate your own supporters? Would Georgias have no move to make, with a commoner—albeit the loveliest woman alive—in the Palace of Novodni? Her son couldn't reign, sir."

"Now, by Heaven!" cried Prince Karl, "we'll not fight this matter all over again! Princess in fact she shall be, as well as in name. As for public opinion, hang public opinion! Heaven above, Von Altdorf, has there been no Draga Maschin? Has there been no Katia Petrofski? Novodnia is not the German Empire, man, nor the kingdom of Italy! Who cares whence came a Balkan princess—whether she was a king's daughter or a peasant's?"

"It's never been the custom of your house to marry save in royal circles," said Von Altdorf. "Your mother was no peasant's daughter, my Prince. I give you my word that if you attempt to seat Madame beside you, your son will never reign in Novodnia, but a Pavelovitch will take the throne that your fathers have held for a century, upon your death, if not before—a short time before."

The Prince dropped his face into his hands and covered his ears.

"Will you have done, man?" he groaned. "Don't I know all you say? Haven't I spent sleepless nights without end over it? Let be, let be, Von Altdorf! I can't bear it now. Wait till it faces us. Give me time to think. Great Heavens! was ever a man so beset?"

"But one thing more, sir," persisted Von Altdorf—"an important thing. It is too much to hope that you were not, or, at least, will not be, followed here. Those devils are too clever to miss the chance. Georgias is out of it, of course, for he's in the mountains somewhere about Maarkin; but his arch cut-throat, Von Steinbrücke, is always in the capital, spying about. He'd know you were gone in the course of a day or so, even if he didn't constantly keep you shadowed, as is most probable; and he'd be off here or send someone with a band of their men at once. Keep indoors, sir, as much as possible. Never go abroad without some of us with you, and never go abroad at all in the night. Think of a bit of news from Paris that would most please Georgias, and would set him—you know where."

The Prince settled back in his chair and dropped his hands wearily into his lap.

"I am in your hands, gentlemen," said he in a tired, overwrought voice. "Do as you will. One thing only I insist upon. I am here in Paris, wisely or foolishly, as you like, and here I stay till I have seen my wife and made myself known to her, till we have come

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"Colonel von Altdorf was holding his head."

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to an understanding. I shall not go back to Novodnia till all this mystery and uncertainty is cleared away, till I know that the Princess Eleanor will follow me when she is able."

"But that, sir——" cried old MacKenzie, and bit his words sharply in two when Von Altdorf raised a warning hand.

"Why, then, with that we must be content," said Von Altdorf, "save that the Princess Eleanor is in no state to be told the truth or to receive you at present, sir. We must wait, and guard your person meantime with all care—God send no ill fall upon Novodnia while you are absent!"

Denis Mallory had been standing by the window that looked out over the grass-plot and shrubbery to the narrow little Rue Boissonade. He was screened from without by the white lace curtains that hung before the window.

He turned and beckoned with his eyes to Colonel von Altdorf, who, after a moment, yawned and strolled nonchalantly across the room.

"There's a pair of shabby-looking chaps have been loitering about in front of the studio for half an hour," whispered Mallory. "They're gotten up to look like Italian models out of work, but I don't think they're models, unless they're new-comers. I've never seen them before. They act peculiar."

Von Altdorf peered through the window and waited till the faces of the two men came into view. Then his own face went suddenly crimson with the effort to keep down the cry that rose to his lips.

"By Heaven! I said they'd come!" he whispered. "One of them's Baron von Steinbrücke, and the other is a rascal in his pay. Von Steinbrücke, eh? The villain's after big game, or he'd never come himself. He'd send others. He's a renegade Austrian, driven out of Vienna by card scandals and attempts at blackmail against some of the Court set, and he's George's right hand—worth two of George at that, blackguard though he is. But they must be driven off somehow before the Prince leaves the house. Creighton, man, come here a moment."

I went over to the window, and Von Altdorf told me briefly what he had just told Denis.

"I think they'll be off if anyone goes out," said he. "Do you try it. They mustn't see the Prince."

I took my hat and stick and went out into the porch and slowly down the path to the high iron fence and the little loge of the concierge. The two loafers outside moved a short distance away and watched. It seemed that they were not easily to be frightened off. I went into the loge and brought the concierge out from the preparation of her dinner, a fat, grey-haired, and merry old woman, with a cheery word for everyone.

I pointed out the two men in the street, taking good care that they should see me doing it, and told her that M. Mallory believed them to be certain thieves who had robbed a friend of his some time since and were no doubt meditating an attack in the Rue Boissonade. This, the concierge opined, grimly, would be made difficult, not to say disagreeable, for them, so long as she retained her health and strength. She retreated to the loge, shaking her great wooden spoon threateningly and muttering to herself.

"Herr von Steinbrücke and friend won't have precisely an easy time of it, spying about here," said I, as I went out into the impasse.

The two men moved off ahead of me toward the Boulevard Raspail, glancing back over their shoulders sullenly enough every moment or two. At the Boulevard they suddenly hailed a passing fiacre, and jumping into it, went off down the street at a great pace. I was after them immediately in another cab—not that there was anything to be gained by following them, but because I was in a mood to give them a fright and teach them a lesson. Moreover, I wished to leave them as far as possible from the Rue Boissonade.

They turned at the Boulevard Montparnasse and drove at a gallop towards the gare, then down the Rue de Rennes to the Boulevard St. Germain, and so to the Place de la Concorde across the river.

Here, in a great throng of vehicles, so thick that they could not have distinguished mine, I bade my cabby turn round, and drove back laughing to the Rue Boissonade.

"Egad!" said I. "They'll be in a panic at every fiacre that comes up behind them for the next hour. They'll be all over Paris before they dare stop."

CHAPTER IX.

"WHY, yes, of course," said Miss Jessica Mannering. "Show Colonel von Altdorf in at once."

"I seem," said Colonel von Altdorf to a small, slender, and very white hand, "I seem to have fallen into the habit of coming here."

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"It's never too late," observed the hand's proprietor sagely, "to form good habits. Besides——" she puckered her brows in meditation and counted upon the fingers of that same hand.

"You've been here but three times before," she announced.

"Three?" he questioned. "I should have thought it was many more, do you know."

"Thank you," said Miss Mannering haughtily.

"Dear me!" murmured Colonel von Altdorf, blinking placidly, "I seem to have said something unfortunate. You look annoyed. Whatever it was, I'm sorry for it, mademoiselle. Alas! I'm unused to the society of ladies. I don't know what to say to please them. They're strange things, mademoiselle, passing strange, and sweet, upon my faith, passing sweet. Still, I don't know what to say to please them."

"And you a diplomatist!" sniffed Miss Mannering.

"That, mademoiselle, is my misfortune, not my fault," protested Von Altdorf sadly. "I was put into the profession while still very young, by a misguided parent. Do you know," he continued presently, "it is in my mind that I came here for a purpose, to discuss something of importance; but upon my word, the thing has quite gone from me. I don't know what it could have been. Perhaps there wasn't anything at all."

"Why, perhaps—perhaps," cried the girl, with dramatic astonishment—"perhaps you came just to see me! Fancy!"

"That," said Colonel von Altdorf, tugging at his moustache, "is quite possible. I wonder it hadn't occurred to me before. Are all American young women brilliant, mademoiselle—as well as beautiful?"

"All of them," nodded the truthful Miss Mannering gravely; "all brilliant and all very, very beautiful. You should visit America, Colonel."

"Alas, mademoiselle!" protested Von Altdorf, "if one of them, and only a little one at that, is sufficient to upset my peace of mind, what should I do among so many? A man loves his peace of mind at two-and-forty, mademoiselle."

Miss Mannering did not dispute it. She looked at the rug. It was a very good sort of rug, as rugs go.

"How is the Princess?" inquired Colonel von Altdorf presently.

"She's living in a bubble of happiness, a Spanish castle of joy," said the girl. "Alas! she doesn't know the bubble must burst and the castle tumble about her ears. She thinks she's on the threshold of a heaven that will last her life long. Ah! what a cruel trick it was, Colonel von Altdorf!"

"Necessity is always cruel, mademoiselle," said the diplomat. "Happiness is usually a bubble, and joy a château en Espagne. And, as everyone knows, bubbles must burst and air castles fade away."

"She was greatly shocked when the Prince burst into the garden the other day," pursued Miss Mannering. "She can't get over the feeling that she has known him or seen him somewhere before, that he has played some part in her life—indeed, it's far from strange! Sir Gavin calls it by some long and dreadful name, the partial recollection. He was quite excited over it."

"But she's better in a general way? She's stronger?" asked Von Altdorf.

"Oh, infinitely better! She's almost her old self again. The colour is back in her cheeks, and the roundness to her neck—she's gained wonderfully in weight. Ah, yes! she's almost as strong as ever now, just in these few days, and all because she's happy. Oh! Mr. Creighton told me of Mr. Mallory's duel with the Prince in the garden the other day. It must have been wonderful."

"He's the most marvellous swordsman I ever saw," said Von Altdorf warmly. "He was born to it. No man, even with the career that Denis has had, could acquire such skill by practice only. It's beyond words."

"And he might have killed the Prince—and made his own way easy," mused the girl. "Mr. Creighton told me that for one little moment he thought it would happen."

"Yes," said Von Altdorf, "for one little moment I thought so, too. No man is above temptation. We saw him tempted, and by Heaven! we saw him put temptation away as few men could have done. But as for that, there are few men like him. I'll tell you something I saw yesterday. I was in his studio waiting for him to come up from the garden where he walked with the Princess. I sat in a big, deep chair that stands in a rather dark corner, and sitting there grew drowsy a bit so that I didn't hear Denis when he entered. The first I knew he was standing in the middle of the room, in the light from the big north windows, and while I live, mademoiselle, I hope never again to see upon a man's face such a look of hopeless agony, such a struggle of the greatest love a man can own, with the call of honour that means renunciation. His soul was in his

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face, mademoiselle, there in that moment when he thought himself alone, and it was a soul that had been led to heaven's gate and shown what was within, only to be hurled deep into hell.

"He threw himself face downward upon the big divan that stands in a corner of the room, and lay there with his hands over his eyes, and his shoulders twisting from time to time.

"I dared not move, show myself, for his own sake, and I couldn't get away without his hearing.

"Then, after a time, he rose to his feet and went across the room to a little cupboard in the wall, which he opened. He took out a bottle—an absinth bottle—and glasses, and a carafe of water, and filled one of the glasses, sitting at a table. He faced the light again so that I could see the struggle in his face.

"Mademoiselle, you who are a woman carefully bred, delicately nurtured, can know nothing, appreciate nothing, of such a struggle, the struggle of racked and quivering nerves for the relief that lies before them, of a will weakened by battle, of a mind ravaged by a passion that it knows is hopeless.

"I say he sat a long time with the full glass in his hand, head bent a bit over it, every nerve in his body, as I knew well, shrieking for the rest, the calm, the ease that a few glasses of that liquor would give them.

"Then all at once he gave his head a little jerk and tore his fingers from the glass with an effort.

"'No!' he cried, quite aloud. 'No, by Heavens, no!' And he went over to the divan again and threw himself face down there and lay still. I crept out after a time very softly. I don't think he heard me, perhaps—indeed, I hope he was even asleep. But my heart bled for him, mademoiselle. He is a man!"

"Poor Mr. Mallory!" cried the girl softly. "Ah! poor Mr. Mallory! My heart bleeds for him too, Colonel. What will become of him—when it's all over? Some lives seem marked for tragedy, don't they? His life has been a tragedy, Heaven knows, young as he is, and it seems as if it must be a crueller one still. Have you seen anything more of those men who came to spy upon the Prince?"

Von Altdorf shook his head.

"Nothing since Creighton gave them such a chase, a week ago," said he. "We're keeping the closest guard upon the Prince. He never stirs out without one or two of us with him. They'll have to be bold indeed to reach him. Still, I shan't rest easy till the Prince is back again in Novodnia, where he belongs. Every moment of his stay here is keenest danger to himself and to the State. But stay he will till he's seen the Princess, and that MacKenzie won't yet allow. In all good faith, I think it were best over with as soon as may be. She's strong again, and every day that passes leaves her deeper and deeper in love with Mr. Mallory, and he with her. Let 'em have done with it, I say. Shock it will be, but as well a shock now as ever."

"Yet we all shrink from the point," said the girl, shaking her head anxiously—"even Sir Gavin. It was easy to enter upon the trick, easy to say that some time, some time in the indefinite future, the truth must be told, the matter cleared up; but when the time comes near, truth-telling seems difficult, Colonel. One realises what one has undertaken and shrinks from what may follow. It won't be an easy thing to do."

"Yet it must be done," said Colonel von Altdorf. "Ah, well, mademoiselle! it's Fate that plays, not we; and it will help no one that we sit here sighing and shaking our heads. Come, will you play for me upon the piano yonder? I hear you playing sometimes when I'm in the garden, or even so far as in the studio, and I love music. Perhaps you would sing also?"

"What shall I sing of?" asked the girl, running a hand up and down the keys softly. "Of war and such?—'arms and the man'? Your life has been full of warfare."

"Why," said Colonel von Altdorf, leaning upon the piano with his folded arms, "why, of anything you will. Still, I've no mind for warfare to-day, mademoiselle. Sing rather of—of peace and—love, and all such."

"'Of peace and—love, and all such!'" murmured the girl. "Are peace and—love so inseparable, then, sir? Must one think of them together? Does love mean peace?"

"Why, no," said Colonel von Altdorf. "No, mademoiselle, love doesn't always mean peace, I fear. Alas! sometimes it means a sad tumult in the heart, a lying awake o' nights, a most perverse restlessness of spirit. Peace! No, love is warfare, after all. Still—sing to me of love, mademoiselle."

"Yet you said the other day," persisted the girl, her head bent over the keys and her hands wandering slowly through some

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"'What! you here?' said he gruffly."

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sweet air, "you said that love hadn't—hadn't come your way, Colonel."

"It's never too late," said Colonel von Altdorf, "to form good habits. I have it on the best of authority. Love may come even at two-and-forty—even when one's poll is grizzled and one clings to one's peace of mind. Sing to me of love, mademoiselle."

She played a little prelude and sang—

"Out upon it! I have loved
Three whole days together;
And am like to love three more,
If it prove fine weather."

"Ah, mademoiselle!" cried Colonel von Altdorf, "do I deserve that? Can you not be kinder?"

And she sang very sweet and low—

"Love in my bosom like a bee —"

Colonel von Altdorf stood by the piano for a long time after she had finished, silent and moody. Then at last he sighed and took up his hat.

"This Love, mademoiselle," said he, "is a strange thing, strange as Fate. I've wondered at it and at the storm it brews, for many years—I'm wondering at it still, wondering the more—but not at the storm it brews. I thank you for your song, mademoiselle. I shall not forget it soon."

CHAPTER X.

THE week which followed the coming of Prince Karl to Paris was for all of us, I think, a time of strain, of inactive waiting for we knew not what. There seemed in the very air a sense of impending ill—vague, unformed, and gloomy; of catastrophe that waited upon the morrow. Fate played—as Von Altdorf would say—but played, as ever, craftily; held her trumps, bided her time, and smiled at us inscrutably across the table.

I say it was a time of inaction, yet we were ever alert in our guard over the person of the Prince. The villains who lurked watchful, somewhere in the throngs that peopled the great city, should lay no hand upon him by fault of ours, should bring no disaster to the crown of Novodnia.

He, poor gentleman, passed the days moodily enough, in all faith, commonly in the apartment of Colonel von Altdorf, in the Avenue de l'Observatoire, where admittance was refused everyone save those whom Von Altdorf himself inspected from the anteroom; sometimes with the others of us in Mallory's studio, which had grown to be a meeting-place, a sort of headquarters. Indeed, we must sadly have disturbed poor Denis in his work, for he still continued his connection with the London paper and wrote his articles and reviews as before. The pittance he received gave him a fair living.

Daily the Prince renewed his siege of MacKenzie for an interview and explanation with the Princess Eleanor, and daily old MacKenzie put him off with a "Not yet, sir! Would you wreck everything? Wait till she's stronger." I knew that Sir Gavin dreaded the inevitable exposure as he had never dreaded anything before. He felt that the responsibility of what we had done rested most heavily upon himself, and he shrank day by day from the storm that must some time break, and day by day put off the Prince upon the old pretext, even after he knew that the pretext was of no weight, and that Madame would never be better able to bear the shock.

As for the Prince, he won our respect and sincere pity in these days, if never our love. We grew to see under his Southern impulsiveness, his quick temper and volatile moods, the real man, honourable, true, and sincere, a soul too frail for the weight of responsibility and power that hung upon it, a nature too weak for the struggle of duty and love that swayed it. He loved his country—indeed, at the end we had no cause to doubt that—and above all else he loved the woman who had been so strangely torn from him at the very altar-steps. But his will lacked the stern strength to make a choice between the two when a choice was demanded. He would neither stay at the post of duty nor throw up all duties and responsibilities for love. Who among us all shall condemn him? To some the good God gives an iron will, a strength to put aside temptation, but to others a heart whose claims will not be denied.

Be all this as it may, we grew fond of his Highness in those days, and filled with an infinite pity for him that softened our first disgust at his weakness. He was a simple gentleman, who should never have been called to a station which he hated and which was far beyond his stature.

As for Denis, he met the Princess Eleanor each afternoon in the garden, save one day when it rained so that being out of doors was impossible and the Princess, seized with a perverse whim that they should see each other nowhere but in their walled Paradise, would not meet him at all, but kept to her chamber, and only sent him a letter, very

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thick in the envelope. Denis spent the day over it, reading it again and again, holding it in his hands when he did not read, and lifting it to his face that he might inhale the faint fragrance of the paper. It was, I think, her first written word to him, and I know that he would have fought for it with his life—such value men will lay upon a scrap of paper scrawled with black!

I was much with him at this time, for that love and admiration for him which, later on, so grew in my heart that I must place him before all the other men whom I have known, was even then strong in me. I think no one, man or woman, might be with Denis day by day without loving him. He was a great soul.

If the Princess Eleanor, drinking the elixir of love, had flushed all in a moment, as it were, into health and strength and rosy happiness, the change in Denis was equally wonderful. He seemed another man. There were marks of the old life that must be upon him to his grave, but the unhealthy pallor of his face was gone, the restlessness of the eyes, the hollows in the cheeks, the disagreeable lines of cynicism, of dissipation, of recklessness about the mouth. His head was reared high in the air now, his step firmer, his eyes clear and alert and quite free from the nervous twitching that had spoiled them before. Why, even his smile, that no ill living, no debauchery had seemed ever to touch, took on a tenderer semblance, a sweeter charm. Ah, he was a man!

As for the drink, he showed a strength that amazed me. No man who has for years habitually drunk large quantities of any alcoholic liquor can suddenly leave it quite off without becoming a nervous wreck; but I think that Denis, at this time, did as nearly without drink of any sort as a man might do. When we sat at a café, he no longer called for absinth, but took brandy or whisky in water, and very little of it, and at meals he used the wine most sparingly. Sometimes in the studio, after a siege of racking nerves that was all too evident, he would take a single glass of absinth, but quite openly. And I think he never trusted himself to take it when alone. I have seen many a plucky fight against besetting vices, but never one so plucky as this.

But it was Colonel von Altdorf whose appearance and conduct were, during these days, most of a mystery to me. He had fallen into a perverse humour that puzzled us all. He had long fits of abstraction, from which he would rouse himself to growl an answer to someone's repeated question. He spoke often of having missed much happiness in his way through life, and of how a single man was at best a poor thing and incomplete. Also he took to reading certain volumes of poetry which Denis had about the studio, and I think he memorised some of the verses, for he would read a space, then look up and move his lips, as if repeating the lines.

It was all very curious and most unlike Von Altdorf. I spoke to Denis of it, but Denis had no eyes for other men's affairs just then, he was busy with his own.

"Let him alone, lad," said Denis. "He's probably in love. They often act that way—when they take it late in life."

"But for the love of Heaven!" I cried, "with whom?"

"The concierge," suggested Denis.

I spoke also of the phenomenon to Miss Jessica Mannering, upon whom I took frequent occasion to call. Miss Mannering was at first moved to extreme mirth. Then after a little she sighed and smiled and touched the keys of the piano before which she was sitting, in the big, gloomy, stone-arched chamber that MacKenzie had transformed into a sort of drawing-room. And she sang under her breath a little snatch of song—

"Love in my bosom like a bee——"

"It would be a great pity," said Miss Mannering, "a great pity if Colonel von Altdorf should fall in love with someone who—who wasn't worthy of him, didn't understand him, would be cruel or cold to him. There aren't many men like Colonel von Altdorf."

"That's true, by Jove!" said I warmly. "Von Altdorf's one of the best! But, I say, why in the world does he want to fall in love at his age?"

"His age!" cried Miss Mannering, with more heat than I thought necessary. "You speak as if he were seventy! Men are mere boys till forty," she declared unkindly.

"Oh! are they, though?" said I. "I suppose I'm expected to be crushed. Ah, well! I shall be forty some day. And now, perhaps, you will tell me with whom Von Altdorf can be in love? I'm quite at a loss—granting that he is in love. Personally I fancy it is indigestion. Denis suggests the concierge."

"You and Mr. Mallory are such wits!" observed Miss Mannering scathingly. "Just because a man of forty or forty-one——"

"Forty-two," said I brutally.

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"—conducts himself," continued Miss Mannering, "in a properly serious manner, you immediately accuse him of being in love? Well, why shouldn't he be in love? Isn't he a brave and gallant gentleman? Isn't he a faithful friend? Isn't he the sort of man a woman might—might like? Isn't he handsome and——"

"Handsome?" I interrupted. "Oh, come now! I shouldn't call Von Altdorf handsome. He's not ugly exactly, but——"

"He is most certainly handsome," said Miss Mannering, with some dignity. "Men never know when other men are attractive. They're always dangling about after some silly girl."

"I'm dangling about after you at just the present moment," said I, "and I'm not so keen on talking about Von Altdorf all the time, either. I say, won't you sing something to me? They say you've a wonderfully beautiful voice. Sing something soft and pretty—something," said I sentimentally, "about love."

"I don't sing love songs," declared Miss Mannering.

"But," I protested, "you were singing a bit of one just a moment ago—

"Love in my bosom like a bee——"

"That—that's different," said she. "I just happened to think of that. It's a song—I sang once for a—very dear friend—a *very* dear friend. I wouldn't sing it for anyone else."

"Oh, very well, then," said I. "I'm going away—I don't think I like you any more. I shall go back to the studio and watch Von Altdorf's evolutions."

But at the door of the room I ran into Von Altdorf's arms. Von Altdorf favoured me with a melodramatic scowl.

"What! you here?" said he gruffly.

"And why not?" I demanded; but just then something came to me. I looked from one to the other of them, Miss Jessica Mannering very pink and smiling and radiant. She hadn't been radiant while I was there—and Von Altdorf with the facial expression of the proverbial small boy caught stealing jam. Then I went out, shaking my head, and made great speed to the studio.

"Denis will laugh till he's weak," said I gleefully. But Denis, when I had told him, said only—

"The lucky devil! Oh, the lucky, lucky devil!" and took his head into his hands, muttering still through his fingers: "The lucky, lucky devil!"

Poor old Denis! Some people seemed never to have any luck. I knew of what he was thinking.

CHAPTER XI.

ELEANOR of Novodnia came down the gravel path of Paradise, and her eyes were the break o' day, lights that did mislead the morn—if only it hadn't been golden afternoon.

She sang in a little, low voice, as one sings for very happiness. She sang—

"Teach me, only teach, Love!
As I ought
I will speak thy speech, Love,
Think thy thought—

Meet if thou require it,
Both demands,
Laying flesh and spirit
In thy hands.

That shall be to-morrow,
Not to-night:
I must bury sorrow
Out of sight!

—Must a little weep, Love,
(Foolish me!)
And so fall asleep, Love,
Loved by thee."

Denis, sitting upon the old stone bench by the fountain, stared at the trickling water and would not turn his head. He gave a little gasp, though, and his heart dropped a beat, when she laid her two hands suddenly over his eyes, standing behind him, and demanded whom he thought she possibly might be. They were cool and soft and firm, the hands, but they set his blood to jumping as if they burned him.

"I don't know who you are," he declared untruthfully—"I can't imagine; but I should fancy you are probably an angel—you've an angel's hands—for this is Paradise, this garden, didn't you know? where no one but angels may come—saving one sorry knave, who enters by the grace of a certain angel, a sort of archangel, who has pity upon his forlorn state and is good to him—God bless her!"

The archangel joined the sorry knave upon the old stone bench.

"And he," she asked softly—"what does he do in return for the certain angel's—pity?"

Denis dropped his face into his hands.

"God help him!" he groaned. "He loves her better than his honour."

"No!" cried the Princess Eleanor sharply. "Ah, no, no! He does not, he must not! Ah! take that back again, Carlo! You love your honour more! Say

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"'If I were not the Prince, nor you the Princess!' said Denis Mallory."

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that you love your honour more! You loved it more when you stayed in Novodnia and wouldn't come to me. You love it more now—say so, Karl, say so! It wouldn't be you if you didn't love your honour better than anything else in the world. Oh! of course, you don't mean what you said; but—don't say it any more, Carlo, it—it hurts me somewhere—inside, you know. It isn't like you."

Denis looked up into her face.

"If ever——" he began, and moistened his dry lips, "if ever you should find that I'd—if ever I should do a dishonourable thing, Eleanor," said he steadily—"if ever I should take an unfair advantage of someone—of a woman—of—of you, lie to you, deceive you about an important thing that meant much to you—what then, Eleanor? What then?"

The Princess put out a hand and laid it over his lips.

"Don't let's talk about such things, Carlo," said she. "They soil our Paradise. They soil you, even the mention of them. You couldn't do such a thing, because it simply isn't in you. If you should do it—if you should—why, I think I should—hate you, Karl, yes, hate you; for you would have blackened all my world, turned me out of Paradise."

"Yes," said Denis Mallory, with a little sigh. "Ah, yes! I thought you would say that. I thought so—I—I merely wanted to know, for—curiosity, you see."

"Well, you've a most morbid curiosity, then," cried the Princess Eleanor; "and you'll be good enough to curb it after this. Curiosity is a vice, didn't you know? Oh, dear me, yes! It gets one into shocking trouble. It killed the cat, you know. What cat? Oh! I don't know what cat—just any cat. I suppose it was a lady cat, though, to be quite just, and died because it couldn't find out what was going on in the next garden. Cats are that way, cats and women—and some men. That's for you, your Serene Highness."

She fell silent for a time, looking down through the garden between the black boled trees.

"Karl," she began after a little, "why do we never talk of what we're going to do presently, when I'm quite well—as if I weren't now!—and we—we go away south, to Novodnia and the Palace in Novodni? Ah! there's the sad part, Carlo mio! Realms take their ruler's time and thought and care, don't they? They never think of the Prince's wife, do they? It never occurs to them that she's sitting alone, very lonely for her Prince, who's with his ministers. Ah! if you weren't the Prince, Carlo!"

"Yes—yes!" cried Denis Mallory, looking up with a strange, eager light in his eyes. "If I weren't the Prince, Eleanor?"

"If you weren't the Prince, Carlo, if you had no realm to govern, no enemies to fight, no duties to worry over! What would you do, Carlo, if you weren't the Prince, nor I the Princess?"

Mallory threw out his arms half fiercely, gripping his hands. His face was flushed and his eyes shone.

"If I weren't the Prince, nor you the Princess, Eleanor," said he; "if I'd nothing to hold me from it, nothing to stand in the way? If I were only a man and you a woman? Why, I'd come to you, here in our Paradise, one day, like this. I'd whisper in your ear: 'Dearest of everything, what are we waiting for, you and I? Listen! To-night, when all is dark, when you've gone to your room and they think you've gone to your bed, when the lights are out and the servants asleep, come away, very softly, to make no noise—oh, very softly! Come out into the garden under the chestnut-trees. I'll be waiting for you by the fountain, and we'll go hand in hand down under the trees, down to the little low door in the wall that gives upon the boulevard. We'll unlock the door and let ourselves out. Then we'll close it again very carefully. There will be a carriage waiting at the kerb—and the broad world waiting beyond, the broad world to pick and choose from, Eleanor. Oh! and a man to care for you, shelter you, guard you from ill, who loves you so that he can't speak of it without a sort of dizziness, who trembles at your finger-tips! What are we waiting for, you and I?'"

"What are we waiting for, you and I?" said the Princess Eleanor in a half-whisper. "Ah! if you weren't the Prince, nor I the Princess! What would you say to the woman who came down through the garden and out the little low door in the wall with you? How would you love her?"

"How should I love her?" cried Denis Mallory in a shaking voice. "How should I love her, Eleanor? How shall I say? Are there words for such things? How should I love her? Oh! words beggar love, my sweet! They must be the same old words that a thousand other men with paltry souls have breathed to a thousand other women whose cheap vanity must be fed. Should I

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drag her to their low level with set phrases, canting words? Tell her that her eyes are stars, and her mouth is a red flower afire, and her cheeks white roses flushed with love? How should I love her, Eleanor? Madly as a martyr loves the cause he dies for, tenderly as the sunshine loves the garden that it wakes to life, as constantly as the tide loves the moon that it follows about the earth! How should I love her? Why, so that all lowness, all meanness, all deceit, all old sorrows and old sins must be laid away, left utterly behind, so that my heart were a rose-garden for her to walk in, my soul a shrine with her image over the altar! Ah! I should be a *man* with her beside me, Eleanor!"

"If you were not the Prince, nor I the Princess," said she in a low, hushed voice that trembled when she spoke, "why, then, you would be the King and I the Queen, King and Queen of all the great, bright, beautiful world! Free to wander hand in hand from one end of our realm to the other. And the world would be a rose-garden then, Carlo, for all my world would be your heart, my king. Ah! I should be the humblest queen that ever lived, for I'd ask no more of privilege than to look in your eyes and see the love there, watch your smile and see how bright the sun shone. The winged angels in heaven must go envying you and me—if you were not the Prince, nor I the Princess!"

A sparrow swooped to the fountain's kerb before their feet and gathered a wisp of straw, a loop of cord. His mate twittered from the branches above while he rose with his burden.

"Yonder goes a king!" cried the Princess Eleanor softly. "And his queen waits and watches for his home-coming. They're building a palace."

She leant her head against the man's shoulder, and tears glittered over her cheeks.

"See, there he goes again, his Majesty! His queen is with him this time. She wouldn't bear him out of her sight. How she loves him! How she plumes her poor little grey feathers to look well in his eyes! His heart is all her world."

"If I were not the Prince, nor you the Princess!" said Denis Mallory.

"The night will come," she whispered, "and I shall go to my room. After a time the servants will be in their beds and the lights out. The fountain will be waiting here and the little closed door in the wall. The carriage will be waiting outside, a whole rank of carriages, and all the wide world beyond."

She raised her head from his shoulder and turned, sitting so that she leaned against him and her hands lay folded upon her breast. Her breath was warm on his lips and she looked into his eyes.

Mallory's heart gave a great leap and stood quite still. The blood went from his face.

"You—you'd—go?" he faltered. "You'd—go?"

"What are we waiting for, you and I?" whispered the Princess Eleanor. "Shall we never see our kingdom? Life o' my soul, your heart jumps under mine! Shall we trade Paradise for a crown?" She dropped her face upon his breast, and a coil of her hair lay fragrant against his lips.

"Aye," said he in a queer, hoarse whisper, and his eyes stared over her head down among the trees of the garden. "Aye, we could go, and no one stop us, no one find us and bring us back. We could go very far away where they'd never think to look for us, very far away to the other side of the world—— That's better than—than Novodnia! Would you dare it, Eleanor? Would you come with me?"

"Yes, yes!" said the voice muffled upon his breast.

Mallory gave a little, exultant cry, a little, nervous exclamation of triumph.

"Shall we trade Paradise for a scruple?" he cried. "Isn't a heaven like that worth more than a point of—a point of—honour? Ah!"

The Princess raised her head quickly from his breast. His arm about her had slackened a bit.

"A point of—honour?" said the Princess slowly. "Why, it is a point of honour—isn't it, Carlo? Why, I've been a bit mad—I think."

She passed a hand across her eyes and gave her head a little shake, as if she would rid herself of a dream, a vision.

"A point of honour! Of course it's honour! Carlo, Carlo, I thought for the time of nothing but what might be before us out—out yonder in the world. I never thought what going away meant—— Oh! I was mad, Carlo mio, drunk with love! I was dreaming!"

"And why not?" cried Mallory, frowning out over her fiercely as if someone stood there cursing him. "Why not? Why shan't we take what we may when it's put before us? Great Heavens! why not? Have I

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been so happy, so lapped in content, that I should throw away my only chance of happiness? Think of the life I've led! Ah-h-h, think of it! Shall I throw heaven away for what the world calls honour? Come with me, Eleanor! Ah, come with me! We'll live such a life, such a life!"

But the girl only clung to him, looking up into his face anxiously, questioningly.

"I know what the life would be, Karl," she said softly. "Oh, I know! I daren't let myself think of it long. Don't I know what it would be? But wouldn't we be sorry—after a time? Wouldn't we regret breaking with our honour——? It's almost all we have ici-bas, isn't it, dear? Honour! How would a whole lifetime founded upon dishonour seem, I wonder? Wouldn't we be sorry? I don't know, as I live, I don't know, Karl. You must decide for us both. If you want me to go, I'll go, for I'm very weak. I'm drunk with love still; I'm full of what that careless, free life might be—our Paradise. You must decide, dear. Whatever you say, I'll do. I'll be the wife of a common gentleman or I'll be the wife of a busy Prince. Choose for me, Karl."

Mallory put her from him gently and rose to his feet and went over to the little fountain, and stood there with his back to the Princess, fighting his fight.

I think he knew what the end must be. I think he had known from the first moment when he had put the thing sanely to his judgment. But the great passion of love that he bore the Princess fought bitterly for mastery of him, painted in cruelly glowing tints the life that lay open to his choice, the possession that must otherwise be lost to him utterly—all for what the world calls honour.

He turned back towards the Princess Eleanor with a hopeless little gesture, and his head drooped.

"If there's any honour left to such a man as I, Eleanor," said he wearily, "it isn't of much consequence, and I suppose I should not hesitate to chuck it over if the price were high enough; but you've laid your honour in my hands, dear, and I mayn't soil it. Some day—later on, you'll know what I'm giving up."

But the Princess came to him swiftly and put out her arms over his shoulders so that her hands held the back of his head, and kissed him, and laid her head once more upon his breast.

"I knew what you'd choose, dear heart!" she cried very low. "Ah, I knew! Honour binds us both, Carlo, doesn't it? And we must stay. You could not love me, dear, so much, loved you not honour more. It's the busy Prince, then, isn't it, dear? Still, I shall be your wife. It isn't as if we were to part, so don't let's be so solemn over it. I'm still your wife, Karl."

"Ah, yes, yes!" said Denis, looking away. "Yes, you'll still be my—wife. It isn't as if we were to part. Come, Eleanor, you must go in. The sun is low and it's growing cool. Come, or MacKenzie will say that I'm not taking proper care of you."

Under the kind shelter of the old refectory porch she raised her face to him, and he kissed her lips.

"You must remember—later on, Eleanor," said he—his voice still sounded weary and overwrought—"remember that I gave up what—what you offered me—that I wasn't quite so despicable as I might have been. Ah! you loveliest thing in all God's great world, how I love you! Heart's soul, how I love you!" And he turned and left her, and went down through the long garden with his head hanging low.

CHAPTER XII.

DENIS and I were sitting in the studio, industriously occupied in blowing smoke rings, at which art I am believed to be an adept. And, indeed, it is a harmless pastime, I protest.

It was near noon, and Denis had been hard at work all the morning with his weekly article for the London paper. A quite imposing pile of written sheets lay before him on the table.

Then Von Altdorf stamped into the room, scowling most portentously.

"The Prince not here?" he snapped, as if he suspected us of having stuffed away his Highness of Novodnia under the divan or in a closet.

"No, he hasn't been in to-day," said Denis between rings.

"Well, then," cried Von Altdorf angrily, "I'd like to know where he is! and why he leaves his rooms without my knowledge and without any word as to where he's going! It's enough to exasperate a saint!"

"Tut, tut, man, man!" said Denis, with an amused laugh. "Sit down and calm yourself. I'm not sure but your language is lèse-majesté. I shall speak to the Prince about it. My word! one might think the Prince a naughty child or an erring servant. Do you feed him and tuck him into his bed o' nights, Von Altdorf?"

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"'Before Heaven, sir! 'tis all I can do not to lay hands upon ye!'"

But Von Altdorf was in no mood for jest.

"You wouldn't think it so dashed funny if he were to fall into the hands of those devils who tracked him here, would you?" he growled. "Well, that's just what he'll do if he persists in going about alone and unprotected. Don't you believe for a moment that because we haven't seen them in a long while, they're not dogging every move he makes. That we haven't seen them only proves them the cleverer."

Denis blew a big ring and drove a little

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one through it. He smiled delightedly upon his work.

"They won't touch the Prince," said he carelessly.

"Won't—— Oh, don't be an ass!" cried the disgusted diplomat.

Denis shook his head.

"No, they won't touch the Prince," he repeated. "I don't believe they're even keeping more than a casual eye upon him. How much do you suppose their cause would be worth in Novodnia if it were known that they'd kidnapped or killed the Prince? Man, the populace would rise up and chase every Pavelovitch follower into the Danube! No, no, they're no such fools as that. They want to keep Karl out of the country all right enough, but they want to keep him out seemingly at his own volition. If you'll think it over a bit, you'll see that they'd only ruin their cause by harming or killing him."

"You've missed your vocation, lad," said Colonel von Altdorf, with a half-sneer. "You belong to the diplomatic service—or the secret police. You've a keen mind." But I could see that he was thinking, for all that, and half convinced.

"And whom, then," he persisted, "whom, then, should you think they're after, my acute young friend, if not the Prince?"

Denis dropped his eyes, and a sudden shade passed over his face.

"If they're after anyone at all," said he, "it's someone whose abduction would keep the Prince, of his own will, away from Novodnia in search for them till he should run them down. But this person, I may add, is being uncommonly well guarded."

Von Altdorf gasped.

"You mean——?" he cried. "You mean the——"

"I mean whomever you like," said Mallory. "But your friends Steinbrücke and company may as well go back to Novodnia. They won't get what they're after."

There were hurried steps without the door, and MacKenzie burst into the room, panting and dishevelled. His big, square face was mottled red and white. His eyes showed an excitement that I had never yet seen in them, and he stood before us staring and breathing hard. His mouth worked as if he would speak, but could not.

Colonel von Altdorf was up in an instant, his face full of a nameless fear. He was thinking, I knew, of the absent Prince. He put out a shaking hand upon MacKenzie's arm.

"What is it, man?" he cried sharply. "What is it? What's wrong? For Heaven's sake, can't you speak? What's the matter?"

MacKenzie let himself down into a chair, and his chin sank upon his breast.

"He's told her!" said he. "The Prince has told her!"

There was a swift, hoarse cry from Denis Mallory, a cry that brought us all to our feet. He was standing by the table with the chair in which he had sat gripped in one hand, lifted far from the floor. His face was quite white, jaw set, lips a straight, thin line, and his eyes burned under lowered brows. He stood so, leaning forward a bit, staring at MacKenzie's bowed head for several seconds, I should think. Then all at once he fell back into his seat, seemed to collapse, crumble together, and laid his arms upon the table and dropped his head upon them. His shoulders twisted and heaved.

I think that for the time the minds of all of us were wholly with him, and that we gave little or no thought to the stricken Princess.

I caught Von Altdorf's eyes, and, as I live, they were filled with tears, and his brows were twisted and drawn in grief. Perhaps my own were like them. I take no shame for it. He went across to the table and bent over the man who lay there. He slipped an arm about the bowed shoulders.

"'Denis, old lad!" said he. Could that be Von Altdorf's voice? It was gentle as a woman's! "Why, dear old lad, it had to come. You knew it had to come. Don't let it knock you under. Heaven knows, lad, we're all sorry enough for the whole wretched business; and we all wish it could end otherwise—but it can't. There never was a chance that it could, not an honourable chance. Come, lad, you've played a man's part, play the man now! You're losing what's all the world to you. Aye, I know, I know; but you've made a trio of friends here that'll stand by you to the last ditch. The hearts are sore for you, lad. Come, buck up! There's much to do yet. The game's not over by a long time."

Denis raised his head from his arms. His face was quite white and very haggard, but there was no trace of feeling upon it. Then he drew a long breath, stretching his arms outward, and was his old self again, save that there was no smile upon his lips, nor light in his eyes, but only an utter calm.

He went over to MacKenzie, who had left his seat and was moving restlessly about the room. He took him by the shoulders and looked into his face.

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"How does—how does she take it?" he asked. "Was she—badly—shocked? Too badly?"

Old MacKenzie looked away.

"She's—much—incensed against ye, lad," said he gently. "She's a bit unreasonable—just now. She won't see that the thing had to be done—— Ye—wouldn't best try to see her—now."

"Yes, yes!" said Denis impatiently. "Yes, yes, I know all that—of course, she thinks me a blackguard—I know all that—— Why, in Heaven's name, shouldn't she? But how has she taken the shock? Will it do her great ill? Will she bear it safely? Tell me if you think she'll get over it."

His only thought seemed to be for her safety and welfare—to make sure that she would bear the strain.

"Why, as for that," said MacKenzie, "yes, lad, I think she'll weather it. She's strong and well. She's able to meet a great shock. 'Tis her—her resentment an' sense o' wrong that's keeping her up now in the worst of it. She's very angry, an' her hurt pride is all in her thoughts. What it will be when the full realisation comes to her later, only God knows, but I think she'll weather it. She has great reserve strength, an', as I've said, she's very angry. Anger is a buffer to grief, of which no one but a medical man appreciates the value."

Denis went back to his table and rested his head upon his hands.

"That's all that matters," said he wearily—"just that she comes through it safely, that she takes no lasting harm. The rest is—why, the rest is—nothing."

Then there was a knock at the door, and the Prince Karl of Novodnia entered. He came into the room with a certain lingering hesitation and glanced up at our faces one by one, furtively under his brows, as if he feared what his reception might be.

Indeed, he met no friendly glance nor welcoming eye. Colonel von Altdorf's face was set and hard, MacKenzie lowered upon him gloomily, and I looked away. Only Denis rose at once and spoke with his ordinary courtesy, as if nothing had happened.

"Pray sit down, sir," said he. "Sir Gavin has just been telling us that you have had an interview with the Princess Eleanor. Our task, then, I take it, is nearly at an end."

The Prince dropped into a chair, and his eyes wandered dully about the room, avoiding our faces. He seemed, in truth, little like a man who had just claimed his wife after months of separation. Indeed, he appeared in the very depths of depression. He sat for a time in gloomy silence, that no one of us offered to break; but at last the hostility about him seemed to reach his nerves, rouse him to a sullen defiance. He looked up at MacKenzie, and his face flushed.

"You show small approval of what I have done, sir," said he.

The Scotsman turned upon him like an angry lion.

"Approval?" he cried, towering above the sulky figure in the chair—"approval, say you? By Heavens, sir! 'tis no thanks to you that the Princess Eleanor is alive to-day! You've done all ye could to make my treatment an' the efforts of all these gentlemen here of no avail. First ye come here with no manner o' warnin', an' though 'tis explained to ye wi' care what we're tryin' to do in the matter o' saving yer wife's reason, ye try to break in upon her the first instant—through a silly jealousy worthy o' a child. Ye try, furthermore, to kill a gallant gentleman who's givin' his time to your service an' hers, an' who spares your life, as, by Heaven, I'd never ha' done. Then lastly, full o' the same silly jealousy, no doubt, ye make yer way into my house an' blurt out the whole truth like an eediot, careless o' whether yer wife can bear the shock or no! Before Heaven, sir! 'tis all I can do not to lay hands upon ye!"

The Prince's face blazed crimson.

"Colonel von Altdorf," said he, "will you remind this—gentleman to whom he is speaking?"

Von Altdorf rose at once to his feet and saluted.

"Sir Gavin," he said coldly, "my duty to my master compels me to warn you that your language is lacking in proper respect."

His tone and his manner shifted the rebuke from MacKenzie and laid it upon the Prince. It was quite plain where his sympathy lay, and the Prince dropped his eyes to the floor.

"Ye cannot frighten me, sir," said the big Scotsman sternly; "ye may as well save your breath. I'm a British subject, an' as such owe ye no allegiance. 'Tis man to man, Karl o' Novodnia; an' I tell ye again, ye have done all in your power to undo what we gentlemen have been tryin' to accomplish, in your service. I tell ye ye've no right to go to my house in my absence an' trouble a patient o' mine, wife or no wife. She's my patient while she's under my charge, an' I'm no in the habit o' havin'

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my methods interfered with. In the proper time the truth ye blurted out to-day would ha' been broken to her gently, gradually, by the proper people, an' all o' the shock possible spared her. Ye have spared her nothing, by Heaven! An' I'll not answer for the consequences. I wash my hands o' the matter here an' now. Ye ha' brought my skill and plans and care all to naught. I wonder are ye proud o' your work?"

The Prince of Novodnia raised his bent head and tried to square his huddled shoulders.

"That will do, sir," said he, with a sort of pathetic dignity, a sort of lonely, friendless sadness that touched my sympathy. "That will do, sir. You make yourself quite clear, and it is quite clear also that these gentlemen feel as you do. I dare say you are right, but I—I cannot bear any more just now." He looked from one face to another with a pitiful half-eagerness, as though he searched for a ray of feeling, of encouragement. "I give you my word," said he, "that when I left the Avenue de l'Observatoire this morning, I had no thought of attempting to see the Princess, no thought save of coming here in the ordinary fashion. It—it was a sudden impulse, an overwhelming impulse that could not be denied. I tell you I have waited till endurance cracked. I have been put off day by day with promises of the near future. I've seen myself no nearer the goal than when I came to Paris, another man taking my place, winning my wife's—my wife's —care—— Nay, sir, I impute to you no blame! I do not question your honour or your good faith—do not misunderstand me! I could bear it no longer! Rash I may be, gentlemen, headstrong and careless, too little thoughtful of the harm I may do; but—I love my wife, and my love has wrecked my judgment. If I have brought grief to her, I must be an equal sufferer, for, as I live, I think I shall never win my wife's love. Gentlemen, gentlemen, have you nothing but condemnation for me?"

"Aye, sir, pity, pity!" cried Denis, springing up and going over to him, while the others of us sat in sullen silence. "Pity —and understanding, sir! There is no one of us who can swear that he would have done otherwise in your place. Sir Gavin is angry that his care has come to nothing, and we others—why, a little aghast that our plans have been so suddenly overturned; but —shall a man mad with love be reasonable or think of consequences? Indeed, I feel for you, sir, if none of these gentlemen do the same. Our trick could have endured but little longer at the best. Come, sir, courage, courage! If the Princess seems unready at the moment to yield you her—her love, why, time will do everything. She'll—she'll love you yet. I—I feel——" But his voice was slipping from his control, shaking dangerously, and he turned about quickly and went over to the window that gave upon the garden, and stood there with his face against the glass. I slipped an arm over his shoulders and stood with him.

"By my faith in Heaven, Denis!" said I, and my voice was no steadier than his, "you're the bravest man and the truest gentleman in the world. You shame us all!" I saw his face and turned my eyes away.

"She'll never love the Prince, Denis," said I, after a pause. I thought it might be a ray of comfort to him in his darkness.

"She must!" he cried. "God help us both! She must! It's her only hope of happiness. She'll turn to him in her utter disgust of me, turn to him for shelter—— What do I matter if only she's happy, Ted? That's all that counts, just that she may be happy! Ah, yes! she'll come to love the Prince—in time."

But I shook my head.

"She'll love you while she lives, Denis," I said, "as you'll love her—and that's something."

"As I'll love her," said he very low, and staring out into the garden that was Paradise no longer. "Why, yes, Teddy, that's something—— Ah, no, no! it mustn't be true—it won't be true! Don't try to comfort a chap, Teddy. I shall get on—somehow."

And behind us, in the room, I hear the three others talking—old MacKenzie in a moderate voice; the Prince very wearily, as if he saw his dream shattered for ever; Von Altdorf anxiously, and urging his master to return to Novodnia, where the need for him was so desperate.

Fate had played one of her trumps—but only one.

(*To be continued.*)

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RECLAIMING AN OCEAN BED:

HOW THE DUTCH PROPOSE TO DRAIN THE ZUYDER ZEE AND RECONQUER FROM THE OCEAN ONE-TENTH OF THEIR KINGDOM.

By WALTER WELLMAN.*

"GOD made the sea, but the Dutch made the land." That is what they say in Holland; and they say truly. Old as the phrase is, it never had better application than now; for the Dutch are preparing to embark upon the greatest land-making enterprise the world ever saw. Everyone knows there is a duel to the death between Old Ocean and the Dutch. When the Dutchman is not fighting on the sea, he is fighting the sea itself. The sea and he are both the best of friends and the best of enemies. Half of Holland is kept upon the surface of the earth only by dint of constant and successful warfare with the waters. Every true son of the Netherlands is trained to battle with the common foe which beats and surges and thunders against the shores of the Low Countries. For centuries this struggle has been going on, and the Dutch have come out victorious. Their heads are still above water. But to hold their own against their enemy is not enough for these plucky, patient Dutchmen; they seek over him a greater triumph than any that has gone before. They have an old, an old and bitter score to settle with him. They hark back a few centuries to the dark and terrible days when the sea invaded the country; when it stole in with its phalanxes of white-plumed billows, marshalled by loud blasts from Boreas's bugle; when with mighty storm-blows it beat down the slender ramparts, overran the land, buried a prosperous countryside, overwhelmed cities old and proud and villages many and happy, and created the Zuyder Zee, where once had been populous Friesland and North Holland.

Look at the map of Holland and see how the Zuyder Zee occupies the centre of the country, cuts the realm in halves. It was not always there. It is an interloper. As late as the eleventh century, old charts show that the present fringe of islands along the North Sea formed a contiguous part of the continent. When the Romans overran Western Europe, the greater part of what is now the Zuyder Zee was covered with forests infested by bears and wolves. In the centre of this great forest, royal hunting-grounds of long ago, was a lake called by Tacitus the "Flevo." In 1170 came the great inundation known in the history of the Netherlands as the "All Saints' Day Flood." The sea, hurled by nor'-westerly storms, beat against the natural barriers, ate and dissolved the sandy islands, swept into the interior, covered the forest. Cities were engulfed, towns destroyed, many thousands of human beings drowned. Quaint and pathetic are the old prints depicting those scenes of tragedy—the fierce storm, the rushing water, the crumbling land, the frantic people, the hopeless struggle to strengthen the dykes, the mad rush to save the lives of domestic animals, the pitiful insignificance of all human efforts against these titanic forces of the elements, and, finally, the poor inhabitants themselves unable to find dry land upon which to escape the fury of the invader. More floods followed in 1237 and 1250, carrying the waters futher inland and widening their area till, by 1410, the Zuyder Zee had assumed substantially its present proportions.

The feud thus begun between the sea and the Dutch is soon to write its final chapter. At last it is the Dutchman's turn. He plans a mighty revenge. Not till the sea has been made to give up the last hectare of that which it seized eight hundred years ago, not till it has been forced to retire, sullen and beaten, beyond the old frontiers, will he call the vendetta at an end.

What the Dutch now propose to do is to reclaim the whole of the Zuyder Zee from the grasp of the ocean. It is a vast, a daring project, the most picturesque engineering enterprise known to the world to-day. An isthmian canal may cost more money; but an isthmian canal is, after all, only a great

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ditch. What is it in comparison with this bold scheme of robbing the sea of its prey, of rescuing from its clutches the little empire it has held dominion over for eight hundred years? While other nations are seeking colonial expansion, the Dutch propose to create a hinterland at home. They propose to reclaim from the waters an area equal to one-fourteenth of all the present Holland. They propose to add nearly one-tenth to the area of cultivable land in their country. They propose to find new homes, where now the sea rages, for a population equal to four per cent. of all the inhabitants of the Netherlands.

Men must live, and their country they have to take as Nature makes or unmakes it; and so the Dutch put afloat upon their new-formed sea great fleets of fishing-vessels and traffic-craft. But as a water of commerce the Zuyder Zee has never been satisfactory. It was shallow, full of dangerous shoals and wicked currents, and wrecks bestrewed it through the years. Fish there were to be caught, but the fisheries were a hazardous trade. Nor was the Zuyder Zee content to stay where it was. Restlessness was its inherited spirit. A born invader, it was ever attempting more invasions. Shallow, a mere pan of water, the winds toyed with it; and when sou'-westers blew great guns, there appeared a difference of nearly twenty feet between the level on the eastern and that on the western side of the sea. The low banks were attacked, overrun, and the country beyond swept with a flood which poisoned the soil with its saline deposits. So all around the shores of this interior ocean the people had to fight for their birthrights. They realised, as their countrymen had realised in other parts of Holland, that their property, their security, depended upon an inch of water. The Dutch of many generations have felt that they had a foe in their midst. And often were they reminded of the genesis of this enemy when fishermen found their anchors catching in the trunks of trees of the ancient, long-submerged forest. There are traditions of divers and bold swimmers in the depths of that water catching glimpses of the ruins of the swallowed city of nearly a thousand years ago, but no historical confidence can be given them.

Upon the eminently practical minds of the Dutch the possibility of draining this vexatious gulf has long exercised an irresistible fascination. Better than the sentiment of reconquering an old enemy was the utilitarian creation of new lands for farms and gardens. Much in the way of such reclamation had been done in other spots during the past two hundred years. Here and there considerable areas of rich land were wrested from the grip of the sea. These recovered patches the Dutch call "polders"; and a striking example of the success of this method of adding to the cultivable area of the country is found in the famous Haarlem Polder, where the lake of that name, lying far below the level of the North Sea, was pumped back into the ocean, leaving 42,000 acres of dry, fertile land, upon which 17,000 people now dwell in peace and comfort. Every visitor to Holland has opportunity to note the richness of the polder lands along the Y, which was drained in the cutting of the great Amsterdam-North Sea Canal. If there is anything the Dutch love, it is good land—land that will produce crops year after year without the use of artificial fertilisers. Some of the best lands in Holland have been reclaimed from the sea; then why not reclaim still greater areas—why not make dry land of the Zuyder Zee itself?

When the Dutch go at a thing, they do not lack in thoroughness. They overlook nothing, they carefully weigh all things. For more than half a century they have been talking of draining the Zuyder Zee. But it is only within the last few years that they have taken up the subject in a serious manner. The first thing they did was characteristic; they appointed a commission to inquire carefully into every phase of the problem—engineering, economic, agricultural, governmental, hygienic, hydraulic, financial. They reckoned with every foot of material, every gallon of water, every hectare or couple of square miles of land, every gulden of outlay and probable income. They prepared a great Bill which Queen Wilhelmina introduced in the Staats-General—a Bill which comprised a statement of the whole case with an elaborateness almost unknown in American or English legislative procedure. This measure has not passed yet; but no one doubts that sooner or later it will become law, and the great work of reclaiming the Zuyder Zee will be practically begun.

None but Dutch engineers would have the courage to go at such a problem. Here is an inland sea with an area of about 1,400 square miles. On one side it is fed by a river of large volume, the Yssel, and by many smaller streams. On the other it is open to the ocean, and

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THE WEST KAPPELSCHE DYKE AT HALF TIDE.

through this wide mouth the tides and storms of the North Sea roll with great fury. How to get the water out of this great basin—and keep it out—how to convert the bottom of that sea into an agricultural district supporting thousands of people who shall live in no danger of another overwhelming by the ancient enemy, at first staggered even the Dutch, the greatest hydraulic engineers in the world. At the outset the problem of what to do with the Yssel puzzled them most. The Dutch may make the land, they may drive out the sea and bar him out with their great dykes, but there was the river, with its steady volume of water; it could not be damned up; it could not be blotted out; it must be reckoned with; its waters must be disposed of. The earliest proposition was to throw a dam across the mouth of the Zuyder Zee to keep out the North Sea, and then to carry the Yssel down to the ocean, some seventy-five miles, perched high above the surrounding country on a great artificial embankment. Even the enthusiasts winced at this colossal scheme, and for a time the Zuyder Zee reclamation project halted, awaiting an easier solution.

Then came a Dutch engineer, Herr C. Lely, long-time Waterstaat Commissioner and now a Member of Parliament, with the simplest sort of key to the complicated problem. His idea was one of those engineering inspirations which in symmetry of proportions and perfect adaptability reach the level of high art, captivating the imagination like a poem.

"Here," said Herr Lely, "is our Zuyder Zee. It submerges about 1,400 square miles of land. This land we want for our farmers and village-folk, for a Greater Holland. But do we want all of it? Is there not some part of it which is not worth reclaiming? Yes. Turn we now to the geologic and hydraulic charts. We know every foot of the bottom of this sea, thanks to the thoroughness with which we have made soundings and borings. We find that the valuable parts are the shoal parts lying near the present shores. These parts are valuable because their bottoms are of clay, light clay, gravel, and light gravel. The deeper parts, near the sea-mouth, scoured by storms and tides, have sandy bottoms. These are not so good for agricultural purposes. The shoals near the shore, having alluvial deposits from the Yssel and the other rivers brought down from the valley of the Rhine, will make us good farms; the deeper sandy areas are almost worthless. Now, our problem is what to do with the Yssel waters? To me it seems simple: We will bar out the ocean with our great sea-wall across the mouth of the basin; we will construct inner dykes enclosing the various and valuable shoal areas; from behind these inner dykes we will pump the water, thus reclaiming that which is best for us, about two-thirds of the whole; and in the other part, the central, deep, sandy-bottomed part, we will let the water

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stay; it shall be, instead of our Zuyder Zee, our Yssel Lake; into it the Yssel shall flow unimpeded; instead of a shallow sea swept by tides and storms, we shall have a deep inland lake, comparatively smooth, whose surface shall carry our commerce; it shall, instead of a salt sea, in time be a fresh-water lake, from which water may be taken for irrigating the dry lands in Friesland; Amsterdam shall not be cut off from water communication to the eastward; having this land-locked inland sea, in the very heart of our little country, opening to the ocean only by means of locks, we shall be able to use it as a part of our system of national defence, for here our ships may find safe refuge in fresh water, whilst the enemy's craft may easily be kept out, and successful attack by land would be made almost impossible."

This solution was generally accepted. It settled all doubts as to the practicability as well as the desirability of the great reclamation. The plan has been adopted, the economic and financial questions involved have been worked out in great detail, and only the authorisation of the Parliament is needed for an actual beginning.

The backbone of this tremendous engineering project is the great sea-dyke, which is to perform the all-important function of shutting out the North Sea—keeping the ancient enemy at a safe distance. This once accomplished, all that remains is simple. Probably the Dutch are the only hydraulic engineers in the world who would calmly propose to wall off a stormy, angry sea, swept by great tides and lofty tidal waves, from an inner body of water measuring twenty-five miles across. The Dutch not only propose it, but they know just how they are going to do it; they have counted every cubic foot of timber, every pound of stone, every willow twig, every day's labour that will be required. They know what they are about. They even have estimated exactly how long the work will take.

This, the greatest of all sea embankments in the wide world, this modern and beautifully useful Chinese wall, will extend from the mainland of North Holland a short distance across a shallow strait to the island of Wieringen, thence across the Zuyder Zee to the coast of Friesland. The total length of the "afsluit dijk" is 24·8 miles. Massive

MAP OF THE ZUYDER ZEE—SHOWING THE AREA IT HAS MAINTAINED FOR THE LAST FIVE CENTURIES.

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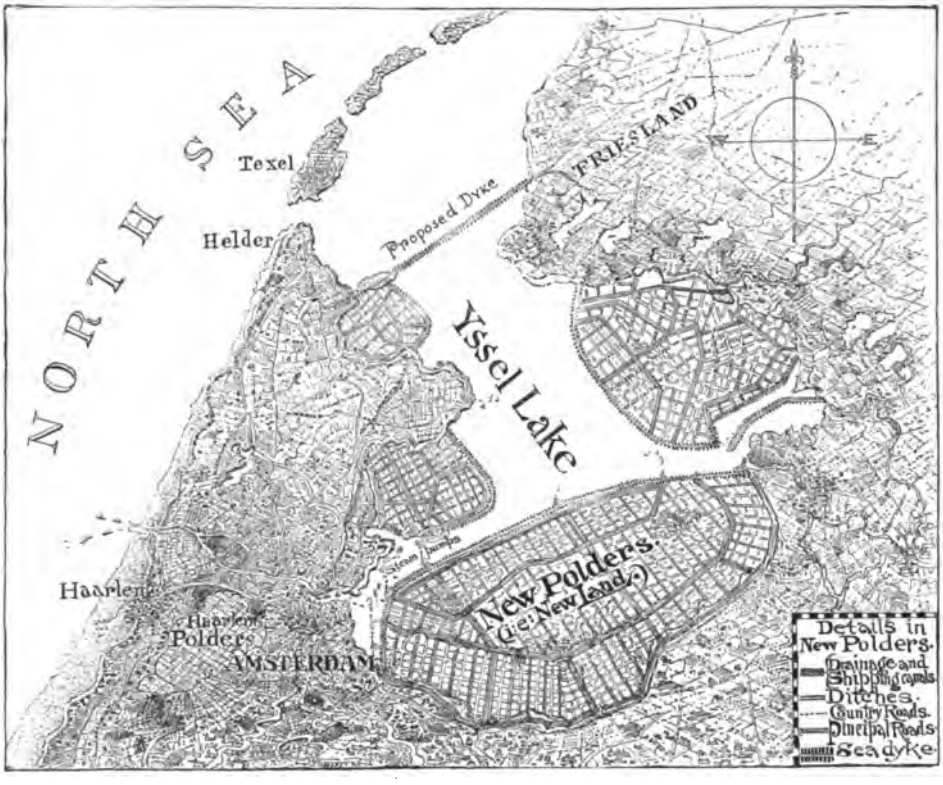

MAP OF THE PROPOSED RECLAMATION—SHOWING POLDERS (RECLAIMED LAND), THE ENCLOSED YSSEL LAKE, AND THE GREAT DYKE SHUTTING OUT THE NORTH SEA.

it must be, firm as a rock, to withstand the attacks of the storms which will beat against it from the North Sea, to resist the pressure of the ice which in winter will drive with terrible force upon its ramparts. Despite the fact that there are here no rock foundations, and that the whole structure must be planted upon the sandy bottom, the Dutch have no fear. All their lives they have been struggling with just such unpromising materials. Nothing but walls of sand now protect most of Holland from the inroads of the ocean. Sand makes a good bulwark, and also a good foundation, if you know how to use it, and there is no trick in this trade that the Dutch engineers had not mastered generations ago.

How is this mighty bulwark to be constructed? At the shore they will fashion mats of interwoven willow twigs, about 3 ft. 3 in. in thickness and of convenient length and breadth. These will be towed out, loaded with stones, earth, sand, and mud, and when sunk will form the foundation of the whole structure. This "linkstuk" rampart, reinforced by solid foundations of timber, will rise almost to the low-water level, and will be faced with stones brought from Scotland and Norway. It will have a breadth of about one hundred feet, and it is designed to serve as the mainstay of the larger structure which is to be superimposed upon it. This latter, composed chiefly of sand, will start from the centre of the other wall and rise at a gentle slope, stone faced, to a height about sixteen feet above the high-water level, and eight and one-half feet above storm level. The total base width of this great bank of sand will be two hundred feet, and the bottom width of the entire embankment, bulwark and backing together, will be eighty-six metres, or about two hundred and eighty feet. The Dutch engineers are confident that this huge pile will endure all the assaults the sea can make upon it. The face turned towards the ocean will present an exact counterpart of the artificial beaches which protect nearly all Holland—a surface of stones from the bottom of the sea to a height above the reach of the mightiest waves, with a flat bench more than thirty feet wide between the low and high

tide lines to receive and moderate the thrust of the surf.

When this great sea-wall is finished, it will be a giant causeway twenty-five miles in length, showing about eighteen feet of its height, and one hundred and ninety feet of its breadth, above the mean level of the waters on the ocean side. It will carry a double-track railway and also a wagon road, both affording a short line of communication between the two parts of the little country—North Holland on the west and Friesland on the east. Sluiceways with locks will permit of the escape of water from Lake Yssel, and also the passage of vessels. Fortunately, the Zuyder Zee is shallow here, the average depth of water being about four metres, or thirteen feet, and the greatest depth in one or two spots about thirty-five feet. Fortunately, also, two-thirds the way across from Wieringen is a shoal which shows above low water. Here an island will be constructed, and the work of building the dyke can thus go on from four points simultaneously—from the Wieringen and Friesland shores, and from both sides of this island of sand built up with "linkstuk" additions.

The great dyke finished, the ocean shut out at last, and the Zuyder Zee made an interior lake, the real work of reclamation will begin. Here Dutch conservatism comes to the front. Instead of rushing at the whole undertaking, determined to finish it up as rapidly as possible, they propose to take their time to it, to proceed by well-ordered, deliberate steps. First they build a dyke around about 53,000 acres of land in the north-western corner of their new-made lake. In building these impoldering dykes they follow methods similar to those employed in the construction of the great embankment, but on a much smaller scale and with a less expensive structure. It is only Lake Yssel they have to shut out now, and the Yssel is to be without tides and without serious storms or ice-rushes. So they will throw up their wide, gently sloped banks of sand, rising only ten feet above the level of the lake, put on a small facing of stones for protection against erosion by the waters, and, when this is done, plant pumping-stations at intervals and pump out the water behind the banks. The area between dry land and this dyke is the polder; and, of course, as its bottom slopes downward from the now dry land towards the lake, it will become gradually dry as the water is removed, until finally the whole polder is reclaimed from the grasp of the sea which has held it so many centuries. As soon as one of the polders is quite or nearly finished, another will be undertaken, and thus the "dry-making" will go on through a long series of years. Thirty-three years are allowed for completion of the whole project, which may be concisely described as follows:—

The great sea-dyke—first to ninth year; cost £3,200,000.

The north-western polder — eighth to fourteenth year; area 53,600 acres; cost £1,000,000.

The south-eastern polder — eleventh to twenty-fourth year; area 266,000 acres; cost £4,950,000.

The south-western polder — twenty-first to twenty-eighth year; area 77,860 acres; cost £1,828,000.

The north-eastern polder—twenty-fifth to thirty-third year; area 125,600 acres; cost £2,800,000.

An idea of the magnitude of this "dry-making" may be judged from the fact that the average depth of the water now covering these 818 square miles is a little more than eighteen feet. That means nearly three cubic miles, or 14,000,000,000 tons, of water. Inasmuch as all this is to be pumped out during a period comprising about twenty years, an average of 70,000,000 tons must be taken out each twelvemonth, making it, without doubt, one of the largest water-pumping operations known to the history of engineering. A surprisingly small installation of machinery will suffice, however, to do the work. According to the plans of the engineers, the pumping-stations are to have a capacity of one horse-power to 1,000 hectares one metre in depth; in other words, one horse-power to each block of water about two miles square and of a depth slightly exceeding one yard. The total horse-power required is estimated at only 4,330, and the economy of the plan is found in the fact that a pumping-plant once set to work, it will go on for years, night and day, without stopping; and as fast as one polder is made dry, all, or nearly all, of the pumps may be moved on to the next one. Each polder is subdivided into three or four sections, or "afdeelings," and the first to become dry may be put under cultivation before the others are relieved of their water by the pumps.

What is to be the cost of the work considered as a whole? And what is to be gained by it? Obviously, the greatest item in the cost is found in the shutting out of

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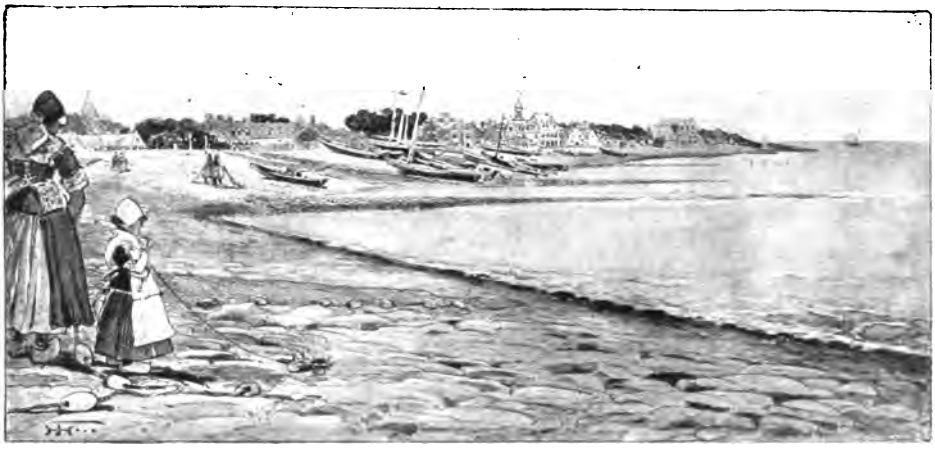

THE SEA-DYKE NEAR HELDER.

the sea. Construction of the great dyke alone is to cost more than £2,200,000. Necessary works in connection therewith, such as improvements at the island of Wieringen, a new canal from Harlingen to Piaam, etc., raise the total outlay for this part of the project to above £3,200,000. Nor is this all. £395,000 are devoted to a subsidy for the Zuyder Zee fishermen, who will now find their vocation gone; some are to be provided with new boats, suitable to deep-sea fisheries, while others are to be retired on old-age pensions. Improvement of the Zwolsche harbour, at the mouth of the Yssel, will cost nearly £350,000. For works in connection with the national defence—locks especially designed for naval ships, etc.—£700,000 are allowed. All these items together make up a sum of nearly five million pounds, as the cost of shutting out the ocean and converting the Zuyder Zee into an interior fresh-water lake.

The actual cost of the entire project is therefore to include nearly four million pounds to be spent on the mere shutting out of the sea, and some ten and a half millions to be devoted to the impoldering of the land. Close upon fifteen million pounds will thus be required for the undertaking.

REPAIRING THE DYKE AT HELDER AFTER A STORM.

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AN INUNDATION OF THE ZUYDER ZEE.
From an old print.

But the careful Dutch economists have not failed to reckon with the matter of interest. They have taken a period of thirty-six years, comprising the beginning of the work and the date when the last acre of the final polder is placed under cultivation. For this period they have approximately figured out the interest upon the investment, gulden by gulden, year by year, and they have found that the capitalised (3 per cent.) cost of their great national project at the end of the thirty-sixth year will represent the enormous sum of £29,625,296.

But the end of the seventeenth year from the beginning of the work will find the north-western polder all under cultivation, with its total area of 53,600 acres, of which 46,500 will be productive land. All these 46,500 acres will then yield an annual rental estimated at about £1 3*s.* 6*d.* an acre. By the end of the twenty-seventh year the huge south-eastern polder will have been reclaimed —247,000 acres of fertile ground. By the end of the thirty-first year the 70,000 acres of the south-western polder will be growing crops and paying rentals. And by the end of the thirty-sixth year the north-eastern polder will add its 112,000 acres to the arable and income-producing area. Placing upon the credit side of the ledger the rentals derived from these finished parts of the work, it has been calculated that at the end of the thirty-sixth year, when the whole area has been reclaimed and put into use, the net aggregate cost of the entire enterprise will be £20,223,360, of which £15,200,000 is for actual construction, and the remainder the interest charge less current income.

At the end of this period the State will find itself in possession of 478,720 acres of cultivable land, recovered from the sea at a cost of £42 4*s.* an acre. The commission which patiently investigated this and all other phases of the project estimated that the new lands would have a renting value of £2 an acre ; and this is claimed to be a low figure, since land in other polders, no better than this, brings rentals of from £2 to £3 12*s.* an acre. It is proposed, however, to lease all the new area at 4½ per cent. upon its cost, which would be £1 10*s.* an acre, and this income, it will be readily seen, would suffice to pay the interest charge of 3 or 3½ per cent. upon the bonds and leave enough over for a sinking fund. It is believed the whole track will be taken up by farmers as fast as it is ready, as the average quantity of land to be placed upon the market each year is only about 14,000 acres. The experience with other lands in the Netherlands reclaimed from the sea has been that they produce large crops without the use of artificial fertilisers. The lessees will be

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required to make their own improvements, but they will have the advantage of water transportation from farm to market for all their products, since it is proposed to intersect the polders with canals and navigable ditches which will touch the borders of every farm.

There is nothing the Dutch like better than planning out a new countryside. They are fond of making maps of their reclaimed areas, with everything worked out with geometrical and mathematical exactness—farms, canals, ditches, roads, locations for villages, churches, and schoolhouses. Where now the Zuyder Zee basks calmly in the sun, or beats up salt billows, as the fit seizes it, they propose to have in their four polders, eight parishes, forty villages, 4,000 farms, and 200,000 dwellers, of whom 40,000 will be working men. That is ten working men to each farm, and each farm to consist of only 120 acres—one man to each twelve-acre lot. In most countries this would be thought a most extravagant allotment of labour, but it must be remembered that in Holland they have intensive farming—they nurse and cull their fields as a flower gardener his violet-beds.

When this greatest of all sea-expelling projects shall have been completed, visitors to Holland will be able to travel about the shores of the present Zuyder Zee, upon the crests of 223 miles of dykes, inclusive of both the great sea-wall and the polder-enclosing embankments. Walking or riding across the former, they will have the North Sea on one side, with its waves and tides; and if they chance to be there during a heavy storm, they will see spray flying over the wagon road and railway, and the mighty waves beating in vain against the artificial barrier which man has so patiently erected. When they look to the north, they will see the boiling salt water rising within eight feet of the top of the bank whereon they stand; but when they turn to the southern side, they will behold a comparatively placid body of fresh water whose level is eighteen feet lower. Notwithstanding this difference between the surfaces of the two seas, despite the force and fury of the expelled one, often with ice in its arms to be used as a battering-ram in mad efforts to regain its lost domain, the Dutch are calmly confident the rampart will stand the test for ever and a day.

The visitor who takes a walk upon the top of the 200 miles of interior dykes will look down at the waters of the Yssel Lake, only ten feet below. But on the landward side he will see farms, crops, houses, churches, canals, and ditches, men and women busy in the fields, from twenty to thirty-two feet below his standing-place. The chimneys of the farmhouses and the tops of the tall

FIGHTING TO SAVE THE DYKES DURING A STORM.
From an old print.

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stacks of grain will be on a level with the surface of the lake the other side of the wall. Ships sailing that sheet of water will afford their passengers a most excellent panoramic view of the country, spread far beneath and beyond the artificial banks. This topsy-turvyness is characteristic of Holland; for there they do not "go down to the sea in ships," but climb hills when they wish to embark, and descend them again when they have finished their sailing over the elevated plateaus of water.

Thus we see how a new Holland will arise out of the ocean. In this vision of prosperous communities occupying the bottom of a sea, there is something that appeals strongly to the imagination. An even more vivid appeal is found in contemplation of the effect upon the dead cities of the Zuyder Zee. Round the edge of that body of water now sleep some of the most ancient towns in Europe. It is difficult for the present generation to realise the part which these decaying cities once played in the history of the world. Stavoren, on the east coast, dates back to 300 B.C., and was a great commercial centre long before the ocean swept in and made it a seaport. As the capital of Friesland, it had its gardens and palaces, where princes and ambassadors gathered from all parts of Europe to make treaties of commerce or alliances with Romans, Danes, Germans, and Franks. The fame of its wealth spread throughout the world.

Hoorn, on the west coast, had, as early as 1400, a cattle fair which soon assumed the proportions of an international gathering. Strange dispensation of Fate!—Hoorn by the dry-making will became an inland town, many miles from any other water than that of a canal—Hoorn, which once sent her merchantmen to all parts of the known world, and whose sailors were famous everywhere; Hoorn, whence sailed Tasman, who discovered New Zealand and Tasmania; Schouten, who was the first to round Cape Horn (and named it after his native town), and Koern, who founded Batavia. Once the home of 25,000 prosperous people into whose laps the world poured its wealth, Hoorn has now only 10,000 sleepy dwellers; and at last it must become an agricultural village, with cabbage-fields growing where once its fleets lay so proudly in the bay. Enkhuizen is more fortunate, for it may remain at the edge of the new lake to dream of former maritime glories. But it will not matter much to Enkhuizen, where once 60,000 people sent out a thousand ships, but which is now a fishing-village of 5,000 souls who wander lazily through miles of silent streets.

Medemblik, too, ancient capital of all this country before Hoorn and Enkhuizen existed, will now cease dreaming of its old-time mastery of the main, and turn its attention to the market-gardening of the new polderlands. Medemblik, which once sheltered kings and armies, and had its palaces and parliaments, is now a town of tottering walls and tumbling houses, a decrepit, toothless old man among cities. All these picturesque relics of former ages, with Edam, Vallendam, Monnickendam, and many more, will now be more or less transformed by the new dry-making; they will become the centres of agricultural districts where intensive farming may pay the yearly rentals to the State and leave enough over for a well-diffused prosperity. The dead cities of the Zuyder Zee may be resurrected by the wizard hand of modern engineering science.

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THE DUEL IN FRANCE.

By ÉDOUARD CHARLES.

Photographs by Clarke and Hyde.

WHEN you want a thing done well, "Do it yourself!" is very excellent advice. But there are occasions on which it does not apply. For instance,

THE INSULT. STUMBLING AGAINST A LADY WITHOUT APOLOGISING.

when you want a duel fought. Being thus situated, I was not so egotistical as to imagine there were not others who could enact the all-important *rôle* of principal as well as myself—or, for that matter, a trifle better. Hence this illustrated article, forming a pictorial record of a duel from start to finish.

Humorous artists and satirical writers notwithstanding, duelling is a very serious business in France. To be convinced of this fact, one has but to spend an afternoon at any of the many

THE EXCHANGE OF CARDS.

salles d'armes in Paris, and he will learn at the same time that no Frenchman's education can be considered complete unless he can handle the foils. It is the easiest thing on earth to get into a duel; a man has, therefore, to be prepared for the possibility, even though he does not thirst for blood; and if he move in Society, where it is considered vulgar to return the compliment of a punched head by punching back, a knowledge of the art of fencing is absolutely indispensable.

THE FOUR SECONDS MEET TO DISCUSS THE CONDITIONS OF THE DUEL.

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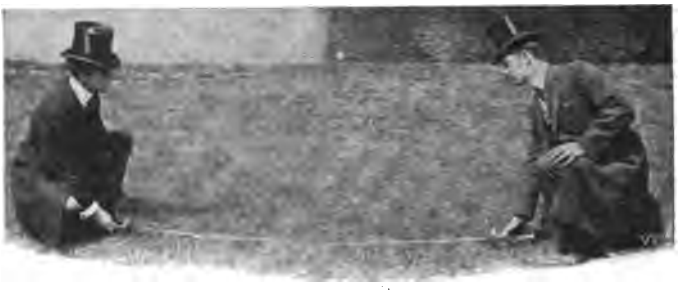
THE PARTIES, ARRIVING ON THE GROUND, SALUTE ONE ANOTHER POLITELY.

The practice of duelling as a means of settling differences amongst gentlemen I am not intending to defend, because I do not think it requires defending. Every man to his taste, and every nation to its custom in avenging an insult; and if the sword is more deadly in its results, it is certainly more genteel than brutal fisticuffs, and not nearly as painful as the British horsewhip.

The regrettable side of duelling is, however, the tendency it creates to rush to arms for trifling reasons. It is that, and the theatrical manner in which duels are managed in France in these days of self-advertisement and journalistic enterprise, that has brought the practice into ridicule. Instead of being regarded, as it rightly should be, as the means whereby one upholds one's honour, it is more generally looked upon as a means to notoriety, to be utilised on every possible occasion. Duels have sent deputies back to the Chamber when they looked in a fair way to losing their seats; duels have brought unknown literary wights into prominence, and turned the failure of a new novel into a success; and more journalists have carved out their reputations with the sword than with the pen.



THE SECONDS, ONE OF EACH SIDE, MEASURE THE DISTANCE.

Duelling, it is true, is prohibited by law, but that, perhaps, is the strongest reason why it flourishes. There is always the hope that the law may interfere and enhance the value of the advertisement; that is why the Law has a blind eye for *opéra bouffe* duels. In nine out of every ten fought, there is never any serious intention of the duellists damaging one another; when by accident one of the parties does get badly hurt, the Law says: "Serve him right!" and intimates to the victor that he will get just as big an advertisement by taking a holiday

THE CRITICAL MOMENT ERE THE TIMEKEEPER GIVES THE WORD.

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WARMING TO THE WORK.

in another land as by waiting to be prosecuted. From all of which it will be gathered that duelling is like log-rolling where *littérateurs* are concerned.

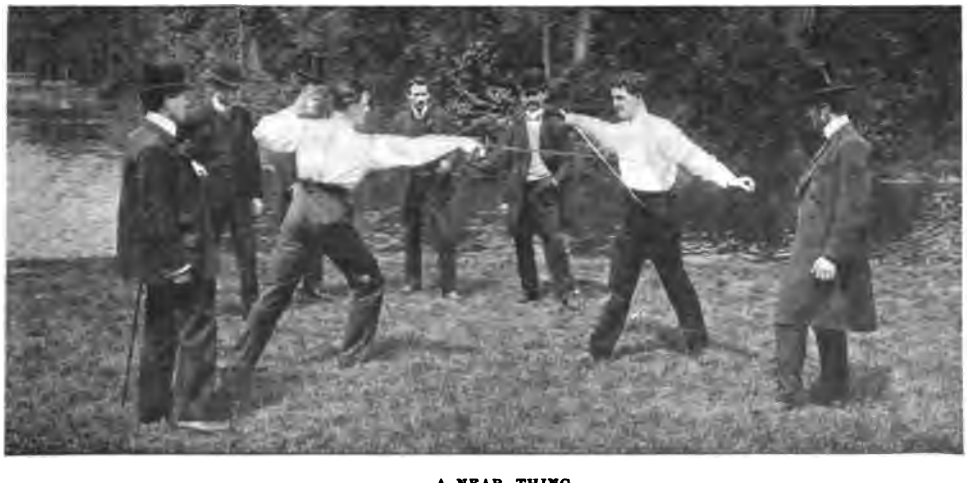
But it has its legitimate uses, as, for example, when it is necessary to teach an individual politeness. Such a case is illustrated in the present series of photographs.

Amongst their dearest friends the principals seek their seconds, two apiece, looking for men who have had some experience in the arranging of *affaires*. And the first thing the seconds think of is the possibility of an apology from the other side. Would or would not their friend accept it? It is seldom an apology will suffice; neither man likes to look as though he wished to back out of the business. And where it is tendered, it is not always accepted.

So the two seconds of one principal call on the other gentleman mostly concerned in this *affaire d'honneur*. He may receive them politely or otherwise, according to his temper, or not at all, merely referring them to his *témoins*. Then both principals trot away to their fencing academy, to put themselves in trim for the forthcoming fight.

The meeting of the seconds is a momentous event. As a *témoin* for your friend, you never know how soon you may be requesting him to return the favour, while you as a principal stand face to face with one of the enemy's seconds. From which it will be gathered that acting as a *témoin*—doing a friend a good turn—is not without its inconveniences. The principal's life—or at least his safety—is in the hands of his seconds; everything depends on their success in arranging terms favourable to their man.

The first consideration is the possibility of



A NEAR THING.

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THE OFFENDER FORCES THE PACE.

an apology on the part of the *offenseur*. Are his seconds empowered to tender one, and so avoid the duel? If they are, maybe the others are not in a position to accept it, acting under instructions. A pacific arrangement being out of the question, the next point is the kind of weapons to be used. There is only one party concerned in the choice of them; they are the representatives of the man who has been insulted. As he will use his undeniable right, there can be no haggling over the matter. Speaking for him, his seconds declare for *une rencontre à l'épée*, and so with foils the offender must fight.

TOUCHED!

Next come the conditions under which the duel is to be fought. These comprise the kind of shirt to be worn, and determine if ordinary gloves and boots shall be worn; whether the use of the left hand shall be permitted; the duration of the rounds, and the interval for repose between the rounds; if it is to be a fight to the finish, or be terminated by the intervention of the doctors; and the date, time, and place of the meeting. The last-mentioned are of the least importance, though, of course, the convenience of both principals has to be studied in determining them.

Most important is the duration of the *reprises* and the intervals for repose. It is in dealing with these that the tact of the *témoins* comes in. Each pair know perfectly well the capabilities of their respective principals, but they may be entirely ignorant of the skill and endurance of the opponent. Once they are possessed of his name, however, they can soon ascertain his record as a duellist. One side may urge for one-minute rounds, with intervals of two minutes; the other for two- or three-minute bouts, with rests of one or two minutes.

The importance of the seconds getting what they require in the matter of the duration of the *reprises* and intervals will be readily recognised where a weak man is pitted against a stronger one. The former might be beaten in the first bout if it endured for three minutes, whereas if it lasted but for a minute, his chance of a successful issue from the combat would be materially increased.

Naturally the timekeeper and referee must be a neutral individual, so where this part of the business is not by common consent conducted by one of the seconds, a man acceptable to the two parties must be found. Each duellist brings his own weapons and his own doctor. Everything being decided upon to the satisfaction of the seconds, the details

are committed to paper and signed by them.

When the combatants arrive on the ground, the parties treat each other with studied politeness, unless, indeed, the principals hold, one for the other, a deep and bitter hatred. Then they are only anxious to be at one another's throat. With the sun shining, position counts a lot, and neither of the rivals likes to have it in his face. This is avoided by choosing a shaded spot; but there may be advantages to be gained in the way of light, so the seconds toss for position. Choice of weapons is likewise decided by the spin of a coin —that is to say, whether a man will fence with his own sword or that brought by his opponent; and if the fight is to be timed by one of the seconds, the coin decides which representative shall undertake the task.

Meanwhile the men have stripped to their shirts, and if gloves are to be used, they have donned them, or do so while the seconds are measuring the ground, as shown in the photograph. Then the principals, foils in hand, face one another. The weapons, outstretched to arm's length, are placed point to point by one of the seconds.

He looks at his chronometer. As the minute-hand rises to the "sixty," he steps back and cries: "Allez, messieurs!"

THE VICTOR THINKS IT ADVISABLE TO QUIT THE SCENE OF ACTION UPON LEARNING THAT HE HAS SERIOUSLY WOUNDED HIS MAN.

The duel has begun. It only remains for one or the other to be wounded, and honour is avenged. The principals invariably shake hands and go about their business—one, perhaps, being carried home in his carriage with his arm in a sling. Five minutes generally sees the finish of the affair, unless the men are particularly well matched, when as many as half-a-dozen rounds may be fought. Immediately one of them is touched by his opponent, a halt is called, and the doctors examine the wound. With them it rests to say whether or not the duel shall be further continued; usually first blood suffices to wipe out the difference that existed, and the two parties go their different ways, rejoicing that honour has been avenged.

WOUNDED BEYOND THE POSSIBILITY OF CONTINUING THE FIGHT. HONOUR IS DECLARED SATISFIED.

Where it unfortunately happens that one of the principals meets his death on the foil's point — a rare occurrence — there remains nothing for the victor but to make himself scarce as speedily as possible, and wait in patience on a foreign shore until the outcry that follows has blown over. He consoles himself with the sympathy of his friends in his enforced exile, and when he returns, is received with open arms.

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LADY MOLLY CALVERLEY.

By H. B. MARRIOTT WATSON.*

ACROSS the way from 11, Hargrave Street stood an attenuated house which seemed to have been crushed flat between its stouter neighbours. Into the windows of the third floor of this desirable residence Lady Molly Calverley had been staring for half an hour, in the hope of finding out who lived in the house and what went on there. She had completed her toilet, and leaned on the sofa of her bedroom, a French novel discarded on the sill, and the latest book of verses from the library sprawling on the floor. This latter had been filched surreptitiously from her sister Evelyn's room, in the hope of discovering what Evelyn really thought about; whereas the paper-back had come in her boxes from school the day before, the present of her dear friend Lydia Scarlett. Molly's watch had proved unavailing. She had noticed a young man enter the house opposite, and through the first-floor windows had traced him ascending the staircase, presumably after having deposited his walking-stick in the hall. He was a handsome figure of a man, but she had not been so fortunate as to see his face, either this day or the day before. What was most aggravating was that the young man vanished between the first and second floors, and all within the narrow house returned to its elemental stillness.

"Perhaps he lives on the first floor. Perhaps it's a lodging-house," said Molly. But, ignorant as she was of proportion in life, she had still some doubts if, in the eclectic neighbourhood of Hargrave Street, lodgings were likely to be found; and so she added to herself meditatively, as she sucked in her underlip: "But it can't be that. The house would cost too much—quite a hundred pounds." This was an amazing fine sum to Molly, if not to her father, whose rent in Hargrave Street more nearly approached four times that. Wearied by a vain pursuit, Molly threw herself on the sofa and carefully selected from a pocket a box of sweets, which she proceeded to eat with astonishing celerity. Her hard young teeth cracked through the lumps of toffee, and her fine animal jaws munched the sticky mass, as a cow might chew the cud of heavenly meditation. Meanwhile her eyes roved about the room in search of discoveries. There was in them a cold, self-centred curiosity which seemed to defy morality and knowledge alike. It was the stare of one perfectly content with her own outlook, oblivious of other points of view, and contemptuous of foreign opinion; but it was also the stare of an unappeasable inquisitiveness. Molly was, in effect, a vivid note of interrogation, although her natural furtiveness enabled her to conceal the fact. It did not usually advertise itself in her face, but as she ate and stared it was now recklessly apparent.

This had been Evelyn's room before Molly had returned from school, and she was anxious to see what traces of Evelyn remained. A few sentimental engravings of young ladies and children in Empire dress engaged in various pastimes hung upon the walls, and here and there was an original and indifferent drawing in water-colours, Evelyn's own work, which she had generously left as a legacy to her successor. On realising this, Molly rose, swiftly and deftly removed the pictures, and threw them into a corner of the room behind the dressing-table.

"Muck!" she said laconically, and stared lovingly at the sentimental engravings. "Now, that's what I should like to be like," was her comment, as her gaze ran with approbation on two graceful but unhuman figures, with doll-like faces, engaged in a minuet. "If only I were like them!" and she glanced down at her muslin frock with critical eyes. But Lady Molly was too practical to dwell long among regrets, and, moreover, she was comforted by the growth of an insidious idea in her mind that she might possibly be better than the doll-like figures in another style. She finished her last chocolate and, preparatory to descending the stairs, regarded herself in the mirror. A complacent look came into her face as she noted the bulging knot of brown hair in the nape of her neck. It had not reposed there until the previous day, and it marked her enfranchisement. Taking courage and spirit anew from the sight, she marched to

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"Someone else had entered the library."

the door, but ran back again to the glass, made a nice adjustment of her skirt, patted her cheek with powder and then rubbed it off nervously and violently, till the flesh glowed and sparkled with life and colour; and finally faded reluctantly from the glass, with a backward and admiring glance at her diminishing reflection.

Lady Molly descended the stairway sedately and listened. There was no sound in the house beyond the flutter of life habitual to it, and Molly sighed.

"I declare," she said, "I'd sooner be back at school, except for the way I've done my hair," she added reflectively. Opening a door at the foot of the staircase, she entered the library and wandered idly from shelf to shelf, seeking for an attractive title. "'Encyclo-pædia Britannica,'" she slowly pronounced. "Oh, Jiminy, what rot! I wonder where they keep Rhoda Broughton. 'Descent of Man.'" She took it from its place, turned the pages, and hastily put it back. "What awful stuff! I thought it was a novel," and here, as if weary of this attempt at choice, and abandoning selection for chance, she drew out a fat volume and threw it open. It had come from the shelf alongside of Darwin, and was full of strange pictures and diagrams. Her eyes arrested by these, Molly began to read.

It was a warm afternoon, and the sun shone brightly into the room, but the large bays of the library were in shadow. It was on the topmost ledge of the ladder in one of these that Molly sat and turned the pages of this odd, unintelligible book. But presently, while endeavouring to discern which end was the "right side up" of a plate, she was aware that someone else had entered the library. Indeed, two people had come in, and at the first sound of the voices Molly let her book collapse from her thoughts and listened.

"I thought it better to explain at once," began a hurried voice, which she identified as her sister Evelyn's.

"If there's any explaining, perhaps it *is* better to get it over," said the second voice,

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which was a man's, and which also Molly recognised without difficulty.

"Tiggy!" said she, and bent her ears with even greater interest.

"You see," pursued Evelyn, with what her sister perceived was trepidation, "I thought it right—I wanted to say—I think you ought to know——"

"Well, it doesn't appear as if we were going to get it over in a hurry, Evelyn," said the man cheerfully.

"What I meant was—I hope you won't think it unkind of me, or that I am heartless; because I am not, Roger. But people make mistakes; and we ought to be glad to find them out ere it is too late, so that—so that a lot of misery may be avoided."

She ended weakly, and for a moment there was silence. Molly almost let her book fall in her eagerness as she leaned forward.

"I think, perhaps, I have fathomed it," said the man's voice at last, and it seemed as cheerful as before; "and I certainly wouldn't dream of thinking you unkind. At any rate, it has been very pleasant—for a time."

"And it isn't as if we had ever been *really* engaged," broke in Evelyn quickly—"you must see that, Roger. There was only—only a sort of understanding; and—and I'm so sorry."

"Exactly," he answered after another slight pause—"only a sort of understanding. Understandings, as we know, Evelyn, are nothing to speak of, while engagements are—well, something. Ours had never, so to speak, materialised—it depended on—on conditions, I suppose. Upon my word, I do not know what it depended on."

"Will you forgive me for hurting you?" asked the invisible Evelyn.

"Why, with all my heart, my dear," responded the man promptly. "I will not deny it hurts, but I can safely deny that I am spiteful." He paused again and then said in a shorter voice: "I suppose it's Holdway?"

"Do you suppose," burst forth his companion hotly, "that it must be someone? Why can you not give me credit for common honesty? Directly I found out I had misunderstood my feelings, I came to you. You owe me thanks, really, Roger, for that."

"Yes, I suppose I owe you thanks, as you say, and I beg to tender them. But on the whole, I'm glad it's not—I'm glad it's no one else. It somehow makes it easier."

Lady Molly's fat, scientific book with the strange plates rolled suddenly off her lap and fell with a great clamour to the floor. The sound created consternation in the adjoining bay, and was immediately followed by the swish of receding skirts and the noise of a door falling to. Upon that, ere Molly had recovered herself, the man emerged from behind the bay and stood peering through his eyeglass. He was of middle height, clean-shaven, and with a quiet, humorous eye, and was apparently about thirty-five years of age. Molly looked at him in some dismay, and he looked at Molly.

"I'm awfully sorry, Tiggy," said she.

Tiggy came forward, picked up the book and examined it.

"A holiday task?" he inquired politely, fixing the embarrassed girl with his shining eyeglass.

"No; I've left school—of course not," returned Molly shortly.

"Then, I imagine, for pleasure," said Tiggy, turning over more pages. He pulled up at an astonishingly complex illustration and regarded it thoughtfully. "'Diagram of the medio-something of the aorta,'" he read. "This must be very interesting, Molly. To think that I have lived all these years and never happened upon it before. If you make any more discoveries like it, you must promise to let me know."

Molly shuffled on her perch. She disliked to be "chaffed" more than she disliked anything, but somehow the irritation she would otherwise have felt was soothed by her knowledge of what had happened.

"I say, Tiggy," she said abruptly, "I'm awfully sorry."

"It was certainly careless of you," said Tiggy; "but, after all, I don't think it's much the worse, except for——"

"Oh, you know—I mean about Evelyn," said Molly, interrupting.

"Oh, about Evelyn!" he remarked slowly. "Then you listened."

"I couldn't help it," retorted Molly hotly. "She spoke so loud, and so did you; and besides, I was here before you."

"That's true," assented Tiggy. "But you might have dropped the book before."

"I never thought of it. I didn't know what you were going to talk of; and I nearly fell off the ladder, trying to keep still."

"Perhaps it would have been better if you had not tried to keep still, and even if you had fallen off the ladder," remarked Tiggy with an air of deliberation.

"She's a beast!" said Molly, deserting the subject.

"I don't think we will discuss Evelyn,

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"A girl with red geraniums in her hair."

Molly, if you don't mind," said the man mildly.

"And don't you believe her. It *is* Holdway. I've asked the children since I got back," continued Molly triumphantly.

Tiggy winced.

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"It was good of you to make sure," he said, "particularly as you have had so short a time to look about you. I think if perhaps you could find the proper place for this—this interesting work of fiction——"

Molly took it from him, replaced it, and descended rapidly. She was full of excitement and anger. Evelyn, as she had gathered from her mother, had been in favour of another term at school; and, besides, the attitude of twenty-three to seventeen is usually distressing.

"I'll jolly well dish Evelyn for you, Tiggy!" she declared eagerly.

"I—I am by no means clear that I should like her dished," said poor Tiggy; "though naturally I appreciate the spirit which inspires your offer."

"We all of us always looked upon you as engaged. It's rot for Evelyn to talk as she did," went on Molly. "She's a sneak, and wants to hook on to old Holdway because of his money."

Once again did the man wince.

"I must make a note of the name of that book," he said. "What was it, again, Molly?"

"Of course, you are rather old for Evelyn," pursued the girl, scrutinising him. "But I'd sooner you had her than anyone else."

"Thanks," ejaculated Tiggy, smiling faintly. "I would have looked after her as a father."

"It's better to be old and good, Tiggy, than to be young and wicked."

"I feel that I am conscious of that hourly," said he mildly.

"Well, I'll take it out of Evelyn," threatened her sister. "See if I don't. She's cheated us of a very nice relation, and I don't care if I do say it to your face."

"I can do nothing but bow my thanks and my appreciation," said Tiggy, doing so.

"And Delia and I had so looked forward to the wedding and being bridesmaids," ended the girl regretfully.

"I am sorry," said Tiggy hesitatingly; "but, if, as you suggest, someone else—Holdway—perhaps bridesmaids will——"

"No," said Molly abruptly, "she shan't. I'll be even with her and revenge you. You can put your shirt on that."

Full of this determination, Lady Molly took the opportunity to desert furtively that afternoon and pay a visit to her friend Lydia, who, exceeding her years by one, and being of quite a different character, naturally appeared to her as the most wise and thorough woman of the world she had known. Molly would have despised her mother's advice where she would have welcomed and accepted Lydia's. She escaped with difficulty, owing to the fact that on the threshold, as she was stealing forth, she encountered the governess, Miss Lyne, and the family, in descending grades, from Delia of fifteen to Marjorie of six.

"Where are you going?" asked Cecily, the nine-year-old girl. "She's no right to go, even if she has got her hair up, has she, Miss Lyne? You can't go alone, Molly," she called out.

"Little children should not meddle with what doesn't concern them," said Molly with dignity. "I'm going shopping with a friend. I've got some shopping to do."

"Take me shopping, Molly! I want to go shopping! I've got some shopping to do to—o—o!" screamed Marjorie on the breeze after her; but the sounds choked—the door must have shut—and the rest of that sobbing plaint was delivered within unsympathising and gloomy walls.

Lydia Scarlett had full red lips and a ripe figure. Being an heiress under a guardian who took his duties very lightly, she was already practically mistress of her own actions, if not yet of her fortune. She lived in Bayswater with her guardian, who was self-centred and a widower, and whose sister was insufficiently strong to dictate to a self-willed young woman. Lydia's advice was brief and blunt, as she sprawled on the sofa in a voluptuous fashion.

"Display your points," was how she summed it up, and looked with affection on some of her own.

Molly had a doubtful expression.

"I haven't very many," she said wistfully; but Lydia did not contradict her in the way she had hoped.

"Oh, you have a good complexion, dear—too high, perhaps," said Miss Scarlett, whose pale cheeks contrasted with her red lips. "And your eyes are fair, although too light—but——" she let her glance go deliberately down the slim young figure, "you're a little thin."

"Well, I'd sooner be that," began Molly hotly, "than be as——" and then stopped. She could not treat Lydia as she would her sister Evelyn; for the attraction and magnetism of schoolgirl superiority were still strong upon her.

"Go on," commanded Miss Scarlett sweetly; and as there was no answer: "I know quite well what you were going to say. I dare say you would—more fool you! Men don't like women's women, my dear, as you'll find

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out. They've got their own ideas, and——" here she once more let her glance stray over herself, "they're not likely to be yours."

"Well," said Molly, with a little laugh, for Lydia at that moment struck her as being "too conceited for anything"—"I want one man's to be mine."

Lydia looked very important. The timid laugh had mollified her.

"Take it from me," she said—"you have to make yours the man's."

This, out of the wisdom of somewhat ripe eighteen, required elucidation; but Molly was a quick pupil and was also no ignoramus. So that she did not need more than a broad hint in order to develop her plan. Holdway gave her the opportunity she desired by arriving on the following afternoon.

Sir George Holdway, a broad-shouldered, square-faced man of middle height, with an easy laugh and a familiar manner, had waited with some impatience for Lady Templeton or her daughter, in the hope that it would be the latter, and not the former, who would enter. Instead of either, he was astounded by the sudden apparition through the doorway into the adjoining room of a girl with red geraniums in her hair and a most marvellous flowing gown of satin clothing her slim form. He started up, and the girl also started aback.

"Sir George!" she exclaimed as in dismay, and Sir George smiled.

"I did not recognise you, Lady Mary," he said, "not in that dress."

"It is my Empire dress," she said modestly, and turned about. "Do you think it is pretty?"

"Pretty, by Jove!" exclaimed Sir George admiringly.

The girdle was loose about the slender bust, and the light sparkled on the satin, making a vivid picture.

"I'm glad," said Molly demurely. "You see, I get no chance to wear things like this. Mamma doesn't like it, and Evelyn won't let me."

"What a shame!" said the young man, eyeing her.

"I put it on surreptitiously," confessed Molly, "and I came in to give someone a surprise."

"By Jove! so you did," ejaculated Sir George, in good humour.

"Oh! I didn't know you were here. I thought mamma was," explained Molly simply.

"By Jove! no; I'm glad——" began Sir George.

"I'm glad you like it, however," went on Molly. "It makes one feel more grown-up. Do you think I look very young, Sir George?"

"You're just young enough," said Sir George gallantly.

Molly seated herself on the edge of a chair and put out her feet, so that the scarlet shoes were in full view.

"You see," she said confidentially, "they won't let me have long enough gowns."

"I don't like long gowns," protested Sir George.

"But you said you liked this!" she exclaimed, raising reproachful eyes to him.

"Oh, by Jove! yes," exclaimed Sir George hastily; "it's stunning!"

"I had the greatest difficulty in getting them to let me do my hair up," said Molly. "I think Evelyn wants to keep me back."

"What a shame!" was again all that Sir George could think of to say.

"I'm not a schoolgirl," continued Molly, crossing her legs boldly; "and many girls used to be married at seventeen, didn't they? I think it's absurd to make rules just as if they could apply to everyone. You mustn't come out till you're eighteen! I know my mind now as much as ever I shall."

"I should think so," said Sir George, who was using his eyes rather than his ears.

"You see," explained Molly, "girls know a good deal more than you think. They could give points to the girls who used to be married at seventeen."

"Married at seventeen," echoed Sir George, to whom the words had come home.

"Lots of them were," said Molly demurely—"our grandmothers, you know."

"Of course, our grandmothers," assented Sir George. "By Jove!" he added, "I don't wonder."

Molly let the fan with which she was supplied fall in her lap and composed herself comfortably in the chair.

"Is there anything going on in town?" she asked languidly.

Sir George started.

"Oh—oh—the usual things," he replied.

"Balls—operas—theatres," Molly sighed. "I suppose you enjoy them very much."

"Not much; rather a bore sometimes," declared Sir George.

"But such beautiful people! such lovely dresses! such amusing companions!" said Molly, languishing.

"By Jove! one needn't go to balls and so on for that," said Sir George heartily. "I don't know that I don't prefer——"

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But Molly was unhappily prevented from learning what he preferred, as Evelyn entered at that moment, in her walking dress, seeming much flurried, and stared in amazement at what she saw.

Sir George rose quickly but awkwardly.

"I—I had hoped to find Lady Templeton in," he said.

"My mother is in," said Evelyn abruptly, and cast a sharp glance at Molly, who was still seated demurely wagging her fan.

"Molly, how can you make yourself so ridiculous?" she went on sharply. "You had better go and change at once."

"Oh, come, Lady Evelyn," protested the young man mildly.

Molly rose, and behind her fan flashed a look at the visitor which was full of liquid light. She moved to the door, and Sir George went after her to open it.

"Thank you so much," she said sweetly, and then, catching her foot in her trailing gown, pitched forward into his arms. Sir George gave an awkward laugh, held the slight form momentarily against him, and then aided her to recover her balance. "Thanks ever so much," said Molly, rosy of face, and disappeared.

"Molly skimmed the air."

"Molly is very wilful," said Evelyn to Sir George, with a deprecating smile as if to apologise for her sister. "I really think she ought to go back to school." But Sir George made no reply.

Molly's delinquency was subsequently brought under the notice of her mother, who reproved her gently and ineffectually.

"Dear, you are too old for that kind of thing," she declared, as she was accustomed to say on hearing her daughter indulge in [illegible]ng. But Molly made no excuses and no protest. She encountered Tiggy in the library, where he was engaged in cataloguing her father's books between the arduous labours of his rare briefs; but she made no reference to Evelyn.

Tiggy fixed his glass in his eye and contemplated her. "You've grown, Molly," he said. "Let me see, you came home on Monday. I believe you've grown since then."

"Have I?" asked Molly eagerly.

Tiggy examined her. "Yes," he said

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deliberately, "you've grown more grown-up."

That was good hearing, because it promised longer frocks and earlier emancipation. The hair had gone up, but the frocks had not gone down—at all events, sufficiently to please Molly. This accounted for her resumption of an ancient pastime common to the young Calverleys, male and female, which was known as "shooting the shoot," and consisted in sliding down the banisters. It was odd that Sir George should have entered while this sport was in full swing. He stood in rapt attention while Marjory came down, and, disregarding the officious services of the footman, approached to watch Delia descend. Thereupon there was a pause. Molly looked at him defiantly.

"Next, please," said Sir George; but even Frank was abashed by the unexpected appearance of a stranger.

"I suppose you think this is a childish amusement?" said Molly with hauteur.

"By Jove, no!" exclaimed Sir George with haste.

"It isn't any more foolish than skating or golf," she went on, somewhat mollified by his admission.

"Of course not—jolly foolish game, golf!" said Sir George.

Molly regarded him suspiciously, but saw no irony in his eye, which was amiable and even apologetic.

"I was chaperoning the children," she explained.

"Oh, Molly! what a——" But Frank's remark was cut short by a push from his sister.

"One has sometimes to amuse the children," said Molly loftily.

"Naturally," agreed Sir George. "Awfully good of you, I'm sure!"

"She does it better than any of us but me!" interjected Marjory's shrill voice.

"I don't, you little——" began Molly, but stopped herself and smiled blandly on Sir George. "Of course, I *can* do it," she observed. "There's really a good deal of skill necessary. The balance is the main thing."

"Won't you?" said Sir George. "Will you——"

"Oh, if you like," said Molly indifferently, and proceeded to the first landing. She tucked her skirt under her and sat gracefully on the rail. "You must only look from that side of the banisters," she said, "or I shall not do it."

"Right," said Sir George promptly; "but," as Molly observed to Delia afterwards, "I know he did, the beast!"

Gracefully, like some swan gliding on the face of the waters, yet ever gathering momentum, Molly skimmed the air and was propelled like a dainty missile from the edge of the balustrade into the wide hall. It was a well-known flight for all the children and served as the exciting culmination of the performance, much as the last plunge over the precipice enthralls the ski-rider or the tobogganist. But on this occasion the performance was not destined to the usual airy flight, for Sir George had moved, and the lithe body of Lady Molly plumped full into his arms with some force.

The impact of that strenuous and healthy frame sufficed to take the wind from the baronet; but though red of face, he held on to his prize and smiled broadly.

"What the dickens——" began Molly indignantly; but suddenly remembering, as only her sex can remember in a crisis, struggled faintly to be free and murmured thanks.

"It was very good of you," she said, "but it was not necessary. I was quite safe."

"I liked it," said the fatuous Sir George, puffing.

"I'm glad you're so easily pleased," said Molly, raising her eyebrows in expressive but calm surprise.

"Catch me, too! Oh, do catch me, too!" shrieked Marjory, poising herself on the banisters; but Sir George was still faint in the pit of his stomach, and hastily retired.

"You will find Evelyn in the drawing-room," said Molly with nonchalance.

"But aren't you—aren't——" wheezed Sir George.

"Evelyn tells me that I must take tea with the children in the nursery," said Molly, looking down demurely like a nun.

"By Jove!" said Sir George, which, after all, meant more with him than with most people.

Miss Lydia Scarlett was pleased to approve of the progress of events, although she did not understand why Molly should take all this trouble. "But when you get a little older, my dear," she told her friend, "this experience will be valuable. It's not bad to begin with."

Particularly was Miss Scarlett satisfied with the episode of the balustrade, of which Molly in cold blood had begun to feel somewhat ashamed. Yet the approbation of her own sex is more soothing to a woman than the admiration of the other, and Molly was inspirited and encouraged to resume her operations. It became less difficult as Sir

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George took it into his head not to keep orthodox hours in his visits, and on several occasions Evelyn was out. On the last occasion, however, Evelyn was not out, but had returned from Bond Street, very cross and very tired. She had consequently retired to her room to compose and rest herself. No one could possibly be expected at such an hour. It was dusk, and the lights had not been lit, but the lamp over the way flared weakly into the drawing-room in which Sir George had been seated alone for some time. He did not expect Lady Templeton when the door opened, and, sure enough, it was not Lady Templeton who entered, but her second daughter, dressed very simply in a virgin robe of white, a single gold brooch at her throat.

"Mamma asked me to tell you that she will be here presently," she explained in her pretty, appealing way. "Evelyn has a headache."

"Oh, I say, I'm sorry," murmured Sir George.

"Yes," said Molly thoughtfully; "naturally you would be, wouldn't you?"

"Of course, by Jove!" declared Sir George, and moved a little nearer on the sofa on which she had seated herself. The fire in the grate burned brightly, but there was little light else in the big room.

"I think Evelyn would make a very beautiful mistress of a house," said Molly, ruminating. "Don't you? She is so handsome and so clever, and so—well—*grande dame*, you know. So different from most girls—don't you think so?"

"I admire Lady Evelyn very much," said Sir George.

"Really? Well, of course you do," said Molly archly, laughing. "Do you know, I think it would be very fine to be rich—really rich, you know."

"Rather a bore, sometimes," hazarded Sir George, observing the fading figure in the dusk.

"Don't you like it?" said Molly in surprise.

"Well," said Sir George, "you see, I've never been anything else, and so I can't say."

"And I've never been anything but poor," said Molly with a sigh. "You know, papa is poor," she added gravely.

"Ripping fine place, Templeton," said Sir George awkwardly.

"And I should like Evelyn to be happy and married, and get away from—from poverty, and noise, and children she dislikes—and——" Molly's fluency failed, for Sir George had taken hold of her hand in the dark.

"Why do you want her to be married?" asked his voice.

"Because," said Molly, letting her hand lie where it was, "she would be happy, and so should I."

"Well," said Sir George, with some defiance, as it seemed, "there are plenty of fellows who would be glad to marry Lady Evelyn. She won't die an old maid."

"Oh, dear, no," said Molly archly; "we all know that."

"Would you like to have plenty of money, Lady Molly?" he asked abruptly, and the hand he held was held tightly.

"Of course," she answered, struggling for the possession of her property. "Sir George, you're hurting my hand; and if Evelyn——"

He said something which sounded like "Bother Evelyn!" but, of course, Molly could not be sure.

"You are always flinging Evelyn at me," he said roughly.

"Good gracious me! I cannot think how you can say such a rude thing," said Molly haughtily. "We have done nothing of the kind. It is you yourself who——"

"Oh, I didn't mean that," said Sir George penitently. "I'm speaking of you—*you*."

"I should like my own hand, please, Sir George," said Molly firmly.

"Answer me one question first," demanded the eager baronet. "You would like to be rich?"

"How can you ask such foolish questions? Of course I should," said Molly. "Please let my hand go."

"Then will you?" pleaded Sir George with fatuous confusion.

"How absurd! I can't be," returned Molly. "You've crushed my little finger."

"Yes, you can, dear," said Sir George in loverlike tones. "Molly, will you marry me?"

"Good gracious!" said Molly, springing to her feet and recapturing her hand, crushed, hot, but entire. "I thought you wanted Evelyn."

"No, not Evelyn, but you, Molly, you!" cried the impassioned lover.

Molly evaded him.

"It would be very nice," she said regretfully, "if I liked you."

"But you do surely you do?" pleaded George.

Molly shook her head.

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"I think there ought to be lights," she said in a practical voice. "This isn't a scene where it should be dark."

"Molly!" cried Sir George, advancing; but Molly had escaped behind a chair, and

"'You are very vulgar,' said Evelyn in her cold way."

in another moment the electric light flooded the room.

Sir George said a word very quietly and distinctly.

"I'm very sorry, Sir George. I like you very much," said Molly sweetly; and, as if in celebration of the illumination, Lady Templeton entered at that moment. She saw an angry face and a demure one, but, being Lady Templeton, did not notice them.

"Mamma," said Molly breathlessly and importantly, "Sir George has asked me to be his wife, and I have regretfully declined."

Lady Templeton sat down heavily in her chair.

"Good Heavens, child!" she exclaimed, and stared.

"I think I had better say 'Good-bye,' Lady Templeton," said Sir George, between bluffness and shame, and he blundered out of the house.

"That settles Evelyn's hash," said Lady Molly, as she went up the stairs in triumph. She took no notice of Marjory or Frank, and condescendingly patted Delia on the shoulder.

"My dear girl," she called her, and expressed a languid opinion as to the superiority of blue ribbon over pink for Delia's hair. "They can't keep me from being out *now*," she thought to herself with glee; "and that's another for Evelyn," she concluded.

Lady Molly Calverley was correct in part of her deductions. Sir George's visits ceased. But in another she was deeply disappointed. There was, as yet, no talk of any *début*. Indeed, it seemed to threaten to slide itself away into the farther distance. This Molly attributed to Evelyn.

"If Evelyn married, it might be different. You might be hurried on, dear," said her mother in her foolish way.

If Evelyn married! Why, it seemed then that she had wrought her own destruction. This was the irony of fate indeed! But still, she had "dished" Evelyn.

"I really could not help his proposing, Evelyn, could I?" asked Molly innocently. "And he has such horrid hands."

"You are very vulgar," said Evelyn in her cold way, and said no more. How could she? She only removed herself in her stately manner from the room.

Fresh from this pleasant encounter, Molly met Tiggy. It would, perhaps, be truer to say that she sought him. The Honourable Roger Martin was half-way up the ladder

when a voice called him from below. He descended, placed a big, calf-bound volume carefully on the shelf, and dusted his sleeve.

"I've done it, Tiggy! I've done it!" cried Molly delightedly.

"If I might ask what it is you've done," said Tiggy, "perhaps we might get on further. You haven't broken another——"

"Oh, you duffer! I told you I would," said Molly disrespectfully. "Holdway's off. He's proposed to *me!*" she burst out.

The Honourable Roger Martin fitted his eyeglass very deliberately.

"Proposed to you!" he repeated.

"Yes, just think; he sat squeezing my hand, the old beast!"

"Old!" said Tiggy thoughtfully. "Well, old, you know!"

"He's thirty," declared Molly.

"And I'm thirty-five," sighed Tiggy.

"Anyhow," said Molly, "he's gone—and you can have Evelyn again now, if you want to."

"That's very kind of you," said Tiggy. "Have you told Evelyn she can have me?"

Molly stared.

"Oh, what rot!" she said indifferently. "Don't chaff. If you want her, there she is; and the sooner she goes, the better, because I'll be allowed 'out' then."

"Ah!" exclaimed Tiggy still thoughtfully. "If I could only manage it for you! But do you know, Molly, I have come to the conclusion I am too old. You are right, my dear. I'm only for a dowager. I feel my grey hairs. You can see it in my eyeglass. It reflects my age and my infirmities, and there stands confessed the image of my future wife."

"Pooh! there's nothing there," said Molly, gazing at his monocle. "I can only see my own face bulging out in a funny way."

"Only your own face!" murmured Tiggy. "I'm sorry it bulges out. There!" The glass skipped from his eye and he smiled on her gravely.

"Then you won't have Evelyn?" said Molly, disappointed.

"My dear Molly," said the Honourable Roger mildly but firmly, "I shall just sit here all day and night until Evelyn comes and proposes to me."

"Oh, you're talking nonsense now!" said Molly, shrugging her shoulders.

"I am thinking sense, child," said he.

Molly shrugged her shoulders again and marched to the door.

"He would have kissed me if I would have let him," she said defiantly as she opened the door.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Tiggy, and put his eyeglass in its place again to look at her. But she was gone; and it was not for some five minutes that Mr. Martin resumed his occupation.

WHEN BEULAH WENT OUT OF HER HEAD.

MY sister Beulah once got sick;
She had the mitten-fever;
She said "Go 'way!" when I peeked in,
And cried when mother went to leave her.

'Twas shameful how they petted her,
And she did act the queerest;
She wanted orange-juice all day,
She did, when oranges was dearest.

I wasn't 'lowed to suck the skins,
Nor sit and hear her talking
About that Chinaman by the door,
And dark things on the ceiling walking.

One night she went out of her head,
Nurse said to Doctor Ball;
I don't know how she managed it,
Her ear-holes being rather small.

'Twas such a funny way to go,
Not asking leave of mother;
And if she never had come back,
That loose head would have been a bother.

They said she wandered all night long—
And it was in December!
I'm going to ask her when she's well;
I do hope that she will remember.

Where did she go, and why she went,
And how she did get out;
And did the head have dreams at home,
With Beulah wandering about?

FLORENCE WILKINSON.

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RED PETALS.

By FRED M. WHITE.*

THEY said in Verolstein that the young Queen was sorely afflicted with distemper; gossips had it that she could do no more than paint red roses, that she lived in a bower of red roses, and that she spoke and thought of nothing else. All of which was bad, for Verolstein was disturbed over the outbreaks on the frontier, whence the rebel Count Arnheim, the Queen's cousin and a strong pretender to the throne, was making much headway. Verolstein *appeared* to be loyal enough, and there was a strong disposition to give the sweet young Queen her chance. But then, Verolstein had ever been fickle as a courtesan, and the thoughtful growled under their breath for want of a king.

And for once rumour spoke the truth. Perhaps there was some method in the young Queen's madness, for this was the eve of St. Agnes—Queen Agnes's patron saint—and all good and true Verolsteiners and Arturians generally would don the red rose of royalty to-morrow. Up amongst the hills yonder were white roses by the hundred, where Arnheim's followers lay; for to-morrow, strange to say, was Arnheim's birthday, and every follower of his would don the white rose as a matter of course. The same thing had happened a year ago, and the streets had run red with the blood of those who carried the white rose. It is a slippery throne that rests on a foundation like this.

There would be no white roses to-morrow—at least, so far as the province of Verolstein was concerned. And it would go hard with anyone who was seen without a red one. Therefore, towards afternoon, the giddy and heedless were scouring the gardens far and wide for the wine-dark blossoms. Before nightfall there was no such thing to be found in the whole fair province.

Even the Queen's roses were exhausted. She crossed the studio where she was painting the typical red flower, and looked out into the wide, wild, beautiful jungle of rocks and gorges and ferns that formed the castle garden. She was very slight and very pale and very fair, with the most wonderful red-gold hair in Europe, and her blue eyes, if filled with trouble, had no glitter of madness in them. It was hard to be young and enthusiastic and tender for one's people, and yet to be thwarted at every turn by traitors thinly veneered as friends.

A slight, handsome little fellow crept into the studio with something of the timidity of a brown mouse. He picked his way daintily between the artistic confusion of bronze and silver and statuary, his absurd little moustaches were faintly cocked.

"Ambrose!" the Queen cried, "you have been successful?"

The other bowed till his rapier started from the scabbard.

"Even I, your Majesty," he replied. "Your poor troubadour has accomplished this thing. I am going to show my sweet mistress yet that I am capable of more than a rondel or a neat couplet in praise of a set of drooping lashes."

"We must not quite lose our fascinating minstrel, Count."

"Ah! that you never shall, madam. But as to the Duchess. De Mignon was pleased to be flattered by my attentions. She is fifty, and the language of love is my mother tongue. Therefore when I pressed a note into her hand imploring an assignation, she consented. At lovers' perjuries they say Jove laughs. That is well for my future state. She came, that painted spy of Arnheim's, that creature of D'Arolles the infamous. We rambled hand in hand over the heath, in the rocky ways, and behold! love's dalliance was cruelly wrecked by a fall on the part of the Duchess. By my dear saint! one of those slim ankles of hers is now as the knee-pan of a kitchen-maid. De Mignon is like to keep her couch for three days to come."

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The Queen came hastily forward, knocking her easel over on the way. The crimson smear on the canvas lay there unheeded.

"Then at last we can act," she said. "We are free at length to move without being observed. De Mignon is an ally of Arnheim's and D'Arolles'. See here."

From the bosom of her dress Queen Agnes produced a roll of paper. From it fell a few withered petals of white rose.

"Natalie brought me this just now," she went on; "she found it in the pocket of one of the Duchess's dresses. Ah! if she only knew how regularly her rooms were searched! There is the conspiracy for eyes to read. Do you know what is going to happen, Ambrose? To-morrow my dear old friend and tutor, Cardinal Marmaison, holds a service in the Cathedral at Rems in honour of my *fête*-day. All my ministers and friends will be bidden to attend. As the State Convocation will be sitting at Rems, nearly everybody devoted to my cause will be there. Rems is my great stronghold. And yet *every one of my followers will wear a white rose.*"

Ambrose stared at his mistress with respectful amazement. For once his eyes expressed more than he intended to convey.

"No, no," the Queen cried, "I am not mad! Nobody should know better than yourself why I have assumed this malevolent distemper. What I say is true. To-morrow D'Arolles gives a dinner to my ministers and others devoted to my service. Afterwards he will present them with the rose, which is my badge, and then they will proceed to the Cathedral. D'Arolles will feign illness and go out. Then every red rose will become a white one, and all these good men and true will be slain as they stand by my infuriated burghers of Rems."

"But, madam," Ambrose stammered, "if those red roses——"

"Will really be white ones. The matter is foreshadowed in this letter. To-morrow the Duchess is to lure me out into a distant part of the grounds. From thence I am to be spirited away. In the anarchy following my disappearance and the death of my faithful ones, Arnheim will sweep down from the hills and make a bid for power."

"Yes, madam; but those changing roses," Ambrose persisted.

"Man of little wit!" the Queen cried. "Is not D'Arolles one of the most subtle chemists in Europe? Did he not come near to the stake at Vamprey for his witchcraft?"

"I have always been sorry for that escape," Ambrose said regretfully.

"Those roses will be chemically treated. A certain exposure to the air, and the red will fade and the white come through. A whisper will go forth in the streets of Rems that my ministers are bearing Arnheim's colours on their breasts. Even if they destroy them and appear without badge at all, it will make no difference. They must be saved."

Ambrose flushed. The pretty spoilt darling of the Court, the squire of dames, the butt and sport of ruffled gallants, he saw his chances now.

"I am ready to die for you," he said proudly.

"Do better than that," the Queen exclaimed. "Live for me. Ambrose, I have every confidence in your courage. And you are quick and smart, as some of my devoted fellows are not. You will have to ride far and fast in time to spare the tragedy. You will be barely able to reach Rems Cathedral before three of the clock to-morrow."

"I pledge my word on it, madam."

"Then go. Two of my guard shall accompany you. Choose for yourself."

"Then I will have Ulric and Eric Sarnstein," Ambrose replied. "Right swordsmen both, and distant kinsmen of mine. They know that my rapier is gilded goosequill. Ah! here will be something to sing of by winter firesides."

He stooped, caught the Queen's hand to his lips, and swaggered away, looking a little more like an audacious brown mouse than usual. To the peril of the way and the danger of the journey he gave no single thought.

II.

OUT from the jaws of the western gate of the castle three cavaliers rode away with the jaunty air of men on pleasure bent. On Ambrose Valery's saddle-bow was a small packet which he secured with careful attention—a small box of wet moss in which the Queen had packed the blood-red roses for her followers to wear on the morrow. There would be none to be got in Rems, and without them there would be short shrift for the three anywhere within a league of that city.

"Safe from all prying eyes!" Ambrose cried. "The cat has pinched her foot, and the cream is safe on the shelf. It is a *fête*, not a fight, that lies before us."

"Cats have nine lives," said Ulric. "And we have not done with the Duchess yet."

"It is D'Arolles we have to deal with,"

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"'Then at last we can act.'"

Eric observed more quietly. "Until his twig is limed for good and all, our lives are in jeopardy. I fancy there may be a fight to-morrow. I pray by my patron that I may be near D'Arolles when the steel is stripped, and that my arm may be as ready as my heart. Scotch that black snake, and our sweet Queen is safe for many a long day hence."

The three men looked one to the other

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swiftly. The bolder Eric had merely voiced the thoughts that ran rampant in the minds of the others. Of all the unscrupulous scoundrels in that fair province, none could compare with D'Arolles. No son of the sword or brother of the rapier was he, but a cunning diplomat ever playing for his own hand and purse, and possessing a fatal faculty for clearing foes from his path. Man or woman, it was all the same to him. He quarrelled not with them, he smiled fairly in their eyes, and then they died of plagues of fever, suddenly and awfully sometimes. Heaven alone knew the secrets of that sealed laboratory of D'Arolles.

"We shall have him unawares!" Ambrose cried. "He little guesses our errand. So he is going to feign illness and creep from the Cathedral unseen. Ha, ha!"

He laughed gaily as he whipped up his sorrel pony. Ulric and Eric stretched along at a hand-gallop, as fine a pair of reckless soldiers as a maid's eye could fain to see.

"He will go out feet first," said Eric. "A vengeance—a vengeance, swift and unexpected and terrible as the death of one of his own foes."

As they swept down the road in a cloud of dust, a figure in rusty leather suit rose from the bracken and whistled softly. The next moment the bushes parted, and a fine, upstanding black horse came out. With an approving pat of the glossy neck, the shabby wayfarer flung himself into the saddle and dashed headlong down a bridle-path so that he emerged presently on the high road some miles or so ahead of the Court rufflers pressing in his rear.

They road on gaily through the mountain paths, clamouring as they went. There was no fear before their eyes, they were on the Queen's business, and it would have gone hard with any man who said them nay. Not that they had any fear—nor, indeed, hope of this, seeing that their mission was secret even from D'Arolles' ally, De Mignon, now happily held from mischief by reason of her afflicted ankle. Ambrose told the tale in his own inimitable manner until the others creaked in their saddles with laughter.

On, on they rode, sparing not their horses till the curtain of night fell from the silent, everlasting hills. They were up on the crest of the ridge now, and far away across the plain they could see the brown haze where Rems lay. They had forty miles to travel, yet they would be there in time.

"A plague on it!" Ulric cried. "My mare has gone lame!"

"And mine," said Eric, "sobs like a maiden for a faithless lover. Do I dream, or is there good entertainment for man and beast hereabouts?"

They came to an inn presently, a long, low, beetling building, where lights were flashing in every window, and the din of voices and the crashing of flagons smote on the uneasy air. A crowd of rufflers and helpers hung about the doorway, the long taproom was crowded with the low, swaggering type only seen where trouble and strife are in the air. A fat, greasy man in a leather cap and blue apron accosted the travellers with surly impudence.

"A bed!" he chuckled in an oily wheeze. "Not for our gracious Queen herself."

Eric rattled the handle of his rapier significantly.

"Our mistress would indeed be sore pressed before she came here," he said, with a contemptuous glance for the company and the reeking walls of the low room, where some two-score adventurers were carousing. "Clear a table yonder, sirrah, and get us supper at once! We shall want a change of horses, too."

Boniface protested more civilly that a horse could not be procured for love or money. There had been a great call for them lately; besides, Arnheim's followers had been raiding the hills in search of likely cattle. Their Excellencies might make inquiries, of course, but no horses would be found. The man was lying fluently, with his tongue in his cheek all the time. Even Ambrose grew grave.

"Someone has been before us," Eric muttered, as he pushed his way none too civilly to their table. "No horses in the hills! Did ever man hear the like?"

"The horses will be found," Ambrose smiled. "We can travel no further on our own. Do you stay here and keep your ears open whilst I see to our steeds' comfort. Mayhap I may see something likely in the stables yonder."

Ambrose returned presently with the air of a man whose exertions have not been in vain. He came with the intelligence that the horses were utterly foundered, and that if Rems was to be reached in time to avert the calamity, they must needs be unfettered by anything nice in the way of scruples.

"There are those about here who are used to finer quarters," he said. "There are four black beasts in yonder stables that might belong to a prince, and their harness to a coxcomb of neighbour Louis' court. What

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are they doing here? And what is *his* business?"

By the door sat the man in shabby leather, the man with the black horse who had preceded our three cavaliers a league or so on the journey. With a big leather "jack" before him, and a long Dutch pipe between his lips, he seemed to be heedless of everybody.

"Do you know him?" Ulric asked, carelessly stretching his legs.

"Aye, marry I do. The rascal is one of D'Arolles' familiars. An evil-looking fellow, who can be mighty agreeable amongst the kitchen louts when he has the mood. Sings a good song and has a fine ear for a key-hole. And there is Wandering Will, too. Hi, Will!"

The new-comer took no heed. He was dressed fantastically in a cast-off Court suit, which was reduced to a neutral tint by exposure, and torn to rags by reason of the owner's wanderings in the bypaths of the hills. His long, matted hair hung on his shoulders, behind him was a kind of rude minstrel's harp. A rollicking rattle of ironical applause greeted his entrance, to which he bowed with profound gravity.

"Have a care for the Queen, have a lip for the cup,
Keep your rapier polished wherever you go,
And take care for your horses, yet other men's steeds——"

He flashed over a bright, meaning eye at Ambrose as he flung himself into one of the benches. Also with a gesture he indicated the man behind him in the rusty leather suit. The look and the gesture were not lost on Ambrose. And Wandering Will was a mine of information ever. Tossing off a brimming cup of somebody's, Will began to sing.

His fine bass voice rolled round the room and rang in the smoking rafters. A roar of applause followed the singing of the song.

"A mere nothing," Will muttered. "There is one here who is my master. Come, Excellency, will not you put up with us for once and let us hear what singing is?"

"I believe the varlet is speaking to you, Ambrose," Eric growled. "Give him the flat of your rapier for his insolence."

Ambrose shook his head. Assuredly there was some deep scheme behind Will's audacity.

"He speaks between lines," he said. "There is mischief afoot. Did you hear what he said about the horses? I'm going

"A figure in rusty leather suit rose from the bracken and whistled softly."

to sing, I tell you. When I start, do you step out and get saddles on to those three black horses. There is only one dolt of a helper in the stables. Wait for me outside. I'll join you as soon as possible."

With some assumption of hauteur, Ambrose hummed a song. Presently his fine tenor voice broke out fresh and clear as a lark. Keen and convivial as the company were, they had never heard anything like this before, this simple little love song like a gem on a dust-heap. In the breathless silence, Ambrose could hear the jingle of bit and bridle outside. As he finished, and the last pure note died away, there was a yell for another.

"One at a time, my friends," Ambrose laughed. "I see one by the door whom I have heard trill a jocund ditty before now. Come, Leather-jacket, it is my call. Give 'em the song of the Five Horsemen."

"I will see you all on the rack first," the leather-jerkined man growled.

Something like a threatening growl followed. The last speaker put down his pipe and slid towards the door. Wandering Will stood before it, his arms outstretched. A dozen dirty hands were laid on the fellow, and he was hoisted on the table.

"Sing, sing!" they roared. "Sing, or we'll tickle the notes out of you with our blades!"

Leather-jacket started hastily to comply in a rolling voice that filled the room. It was a long song that Ambrose had purposely chosen. He slipped out in the uproar, glad when the fresh, pure air smote on his lungs again. Eric and Ulric were already mounted, a third horse stood pawing the ground close by.

"That was neatly done!" Ambrose cried. "We shall not be missed for a good ten minutes yet. I set my fellow a task, and Will will see that he does not move too soon. And you?"

"Our task was easy," Ulric explained. "There were the horses, and no more than the oaf of a stableman to say us nay. He protested that the cattle belonged to men of position, and, in faith! he was not far wrong. See the crest?"

In the shimmer of light Ambrose could just make out the design on the harness. Then he felt hastily in his own saddle-bag. The precious packet of wet moss was safe.

"Arnheim!" he cried. "Arnheim in that very house yonder! It seems to me, gentlemen, that we have had a narrow escape."

"And that our mission is understood," Eric smiled.

"Also that Wandering Will's ready wit saved us," said Ambrose. "Hark! We had better press on before yonder brawl gets worse."

There was a roar as of angry bees inside the inn, stamps and yells, and the sound of blows, as the three cavaliers dashed into the darkness.

III.

It was long past noon when the three drew rein before the "King's Arms," in Rems high-street. As they came into the city they did not fail to notice the strange feverishness that seemed to possess the town like a plague. The streets were thronged with people moving to and fro in twos and threes, partly as if for protection, and partly as if furtively suspicious of everybody else.

They were troubled times, and strange rumours were in the air. The Queen's malady and the story of the painted red roses was on every lip. Arnheim was coming down from the hills, like one of his wolves, with twenty thousand swords behind him. The Court and ministers had turned against Queen Agnes, and were only awaiting the signal to declare themselves. D'Arolles' agents were everywhere, and they had circulated their poisonous reports cunningly.

More than once during the century the cobble-stones of Rems had run red with blood. The citizens were getting sick of intrigue and slaughter. They had only lately seen a young girl succeed to the throne, and they had hoped for peace and tranquillity to develop their prosperous trades.

They were all for the Queen, but they did not know her well enough, as yet, to carry their loyalty to the sword's point. If D'Arolles came down from the hills sufficiently strong to carry the city, the city would submit. Not that they loved Arnheim, but anything was better than that hideous slaughter.

All the same, every man, woman, and child sported the red rose. D'Arolles, ruling the city as a blight, and cursed by every citizen under his breath, had ordered it so. If only they could be rid of the dark, little, sardonic man and his constant intrigues! All bowed down to him, all feared him, as he was trusted by none. All the same, those armed rufflers in the narrow streets were his agents, and it was they who stated covertly that the Court and ministry were going to throw off the yoke to-day and appear at the

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grand Cathedral service wearing the white rose of Arnheim. And if they did, those assumed friends of the Queen swore to massacre the lot, including his Eminence Cardinal Marmaison, on the very altar-steps. No wonder that Rems was uneasy and restless; no wonder that they would have heard of D'Arolles' dissolution with complacent satisfaction. The trap might be set for them, after all.

A score of armed ruffians were swaggering before the "King's Arms" as the three dismounted. More than one of them glanced curiously at the black barbs. But the three sported the crimson roses on their breasts, and no questions were asked, nothing more than insolent stares on the part of the ruffish crew.

"D'Arolles' lambs to a man," Ambrose muttered. "There will be stiff work for us presently. It would be well to be at the Cathedral early."

"It would be better to line the inner man first," Eric muttered. "It is but sorry work fighting on an empty stomach. Fellow! take these horses and see to them."

Eric swaggered into the hostel, followed by the rest. Here all was quiet enough, for they had the great dining-hall to themselves, and in the mullioned window fared royally on a haunch and a flagon of red wine each, after which they smoked a pipe of Virginia each at leisure.

Meanwhile the crowd outside was increasing. Red roses could be seen on every side. Presently a small cavalcade rode down the centre of the street, the populace making way respectfully and yet with no signs of heartiness or warm greeting.

"Who's the devil's disciple in the centre?" asked Ulric. "The little man with the eye of a hawk and the skin of dirty parchment? By the rood! I should be loth to trust him far."

"D'Arolles himself!" Ambrose said quietly. "Evidently the banquet to ministers is a thing of the past, and he is on the way to the Cathedral. And there goes the Cardinal. Our Lady keep him! He little knows how near he is to death."

"Or D'Arolles, for that matter," Ulric growled, as he touched his rapier.

"Messieurs, the game commences in earnest. If we are going to get a good seat at the play, it seems to me that we had better be up and doing."

"The man in the corner sees most of the game," Ambrose observed. "Our place will be a lowly one, near the north porch."

"And what shall we do there, my cheerful bard?"

"Why, intercept D'Arolles' escape, of course. Stay where we can watch the infernal juggling from start to finish. We will want to see the roses turn from red to white, want to see D'Arolles rush out with simulated horror to tell his armed assassins outside what has happened, so that they may rush in and murder everybody there in the name of Queen Agnes and the sacred call of loyalty. Wait there, my brothers, and stop that part of the tragedy, and—turn the roses *from white to red again*."

Ambrose's head was flung back, his whole aspect changed. He was no longer the sprightly Court dandy, the squire of dames, the pet of a circle. He spake in ringing tones; his eyes flashed with a strange, grim purpose.

"There is a plan in that clever head," cried Ulric, not without admiration. "Glad am I that you came along, Ambrose."

"What would you have done without me?" Ambrose laughed.

"I' faith!" Ulric confessed frankly, "I do not know. Died with the Queen's name upon our lips——"

"And left D'Arolles to his triumph! We shall see something presently that Time will write in red, large letters in the history of Europe. *Allons!*"

They swaggered out into the street as if they had no care in the world. Yet their red roses were displayed conspicuously on their doublets, and the rapiers were ready. All Rems seemed to be out of doors to-day—anxious-looking citizens, eager students pushing the mob this way and that, wolfish-eyed men with the brown stains of the hills on their faces, men who seemed ready for anything.

"D'Arolles' parasites, these," Ambrose whispered, "and followers of Arnheim to a man. Their hands will be red presently, or so they think. My faith! it is a poor sort of greeting that waits for her Majesty's ministers to-day."

Through the jostling, pushing crowd a statesman thrust his way. The ministers were greeted with a faint murmur and hostile looks. Small wonder, when the good people of Rems had been told that ere long one and all would be traitors to their Queen. The poison had been poured steadily into willing ears.

The Cathedral was reached at length. In the large open square a dense mass of people had gathered. The lean-flanked men from the hills were well to the fore. Only those

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invited had entered the Cathedral. Ambrose and Eric and Ulric swaggered past the guard with the easy assumption of invited guests.

There were not more than two hundred guests altogether, but a glance on the part of the adventurers disclosed the fact that they constituted the cream of Queen Agnes's following. Without them, she had been a rudderless ship on a stormy ocean; without them, Arnheim might push his way to the throne unaided. And they were doomed every one of them by a plot as infamous as any ever conceived by the Borgia.

The doors closed presently; the organ boomed in the fretted roof, the service commenced. Outside came a rocking, uneasy din, as an angry sea on a rocky coast. Ever and anon could be heard a sound as of the clashing of arms. In the gloomy niche of a high tomb near the great north porch, the adventurers watched and waited. Higher and higher grew the din outside, so that the good old Cardinal paused in his sermon with a gesture of pitiful patience. Ambrose could see the expression in that grand, broad face, he could see the heaving of the shoulders and the fall of the breast. Then he saw more; he saw the red rose over Marmaison's heart change from crimson to drab, to white.

Others had seen it, too, for there was a cry of astonishment. The Cardinal paused and looked down in amazement. He could see white roses everywhere. For a moment hands sought rapiers, for every man fed upon a deep distrust of his neighbour. Each man had been tricked he knew not how, but each deemed the rest to be traitors.

From the great stone pulpit Cardinal Marmaison looked down helplessly. At the same time a slight figure with pale face and gleaming black eyes was hastening to the door—the only man save our adventurers who wore a real red rose on his breast. He reached a hand for the lock, but Ulric had him in a grip of steel.

"Not yet, traitor and murderer!" he hissed. "This is your doing. Your hired assassins wait outside for the signal that the red roses have grown white. And so you would destroy all those who are on the side of our gracious Queen."

"I am D'Arolles," the other said hoarsely. "Out of my way!"

"If you were ten times D'Arolles, and ten times the abandoned scoundrel that you are, no!" Ambrose said. "If you would save your skin, go back."

The Cardinal looked down uneasily from the pulpit.

"Ruffling in the house of God!" he cried. "Shame on you, whoever you are! Surely the fiend has been at work enough here already."

"Help! help!" D'Arolles cried. "There are traitors here! Traitors! traitors!"

Immediately there came a thundering on the doors, the clash of steel, the shrill yells and cries of the hillmen. Ambrose strode up the aisle.

"There is no time to waste!" he screamed. "D'Arolles is the traitor—the arch-traitor, and the most cunning chemist in Europe! It was he who gave you all the red roses so deftly treated that the crimson turned to white on exposure to the air. You are all for the Queen, but the people here have been told that you would dare to come here to-day wearing the white rose of the House of Arnheim. A pack of Arnheim's wolves wait outside to destroy you all; they will point to the white roses on your breasts as their justification, and the people of Rems will hang you in chains. Bah! cannot you see that if this thing is done, Arnheim's path to the throne is clear?"

As Ambrose spoke, his own rose seemed to go out to a pale drab. The other two noted the change in their own badge.

"At the inn last night," Ambrose whispered. "The man in the leathern suit. He must have tampered with my saddle-bag."

A cry from within the Cathedral rose noisy and rampant as the din outside. The big oaken doors were giving under repeated blows.

"No murder here, I beg of you!" the Cardinal cried. "Consider, consider——"

He came down amongst them, his flowing robes rustling. He might as well have addressed a pack of hungry wolves with the quarry in sight.

"D'Arolles!" they cried. "The blood of D'Arolles!"

"I will have no murder here!" Marmaison thundered.

"Then we are all to be murdered here," a voice cried. "D'Arolles, or all of us! He dies!"

A hundred voices took up the echoing cry. From outside came answering yells, half a yard of rapier came through the splintering door. D'Arolles fled hastily, mad to fling his body across the altar. He would be safe there. But a nimble-footed gallant headed him off, so that, perforce, he was compelled to fly for the chapel of St. Mark's, with the faint hope of reaching the cloisters beyond.

"Put your poor, faded roses in your pockets,

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"Thrust the dead body forth."

comrades," Ambrose said between his teeth. "I will show you a good use for them presently. We will defend this door. Meanwhile, unless ill befalls us, D'Arolles is doomed. Then we shall know how to act."

A panel in the door burst like a pistol-shot, and three figures staggered in. Two of them were instantly transfixed, the third rolled upon the floor. He scrambled to his feet and turned with flashing, dazzling blade. A cry of delight burst from Ambrose.

"Arnheim!" he yelled. "The white wolf himself! Engage!"

He fell on the man with incredible dash and fury. Beaten back and taken absolutely by surprise, Arnheim fought but feebly. There was a slip—a stagger—and he went crashing to the ground; Ambrose's weapon passed clean through his heart.

He raised the slim, wiry figure with a grunt of triumph. As another panel of the door gave way, he thrust the dead body forth.

"There is your leader!" he cried. "We have scant use for traitors here. We are all for the Queen, as we shall prove to Rems presently."

A strange lull in the outside tumult followed. The whole thing had been so terrible and so unexpected. The townspeople had fallen back when the news had reached them, hardly knowing what to think. They had been innocent of the fact that Arnheim had been amongst them. Did it not point to the collusion between the dead rebel and

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D'Arolles? And how could those folk in the Cathedral yonder be traitors when they had struck such a blow for the Queen? And yet they had been told that they should see the white roses for themselves.

Clearly, it was, after all, no concern of theirs. They fell back uneasy and ashamed, leaving Arnheim's followers to fight for the Cathedral. Meanwhile, D'Arolles had reached the cloisters; he turned and kissed his hand to his foes. He was free. Then a fleet shadow seemed to rise from the brown walls, there was a flash and a cry, and D'Arolles lay back with his heart's blood pouring out into a hollow cup in the flagstones worn by countless feet down the dim avenue of past generations.

"Fate well deserved!" Marmaison murmured. "Praise God he died not in the Cathedral itself! And what are we to do now, gentlemen?"

Ambrose stepped forward. He had come swiftly along at the cry that D'Arolles was no more. He took from his doublet his faded rose.

"They said outside we were not for the Queen," he cried. "They said that they should see the white roses of Arnheim's on our hearts. But the traitor has died so that we can drive the lie back to their lips. My lords, behold the red rose of Queen Agnes!"

He stooped, dipped the pallid flower in the blood of the traitor, shook it, and held it aloft. The thick, crimson fluid dyed it to the deepest crimson. A rocking, thundering murmur of applause followed. Five minutes later, and the red roses glistened in every breast. Then the doors of the Cathedral were flung open, and five-score of gallant gentlemen, with the badge of the Queen over their hearts, emerged.

One instant, and then Rems burst into a mighty cheer. Taken utterly by surprise, leaderless, their cause hopelessly lost, the wolves turned and fled and were seen no more. It was a day of fierce excitement and wild enthusiasm, but the good people of Rems slept that night with a tranquillity they had not known for years.

* * * * *

The Duchess de Mignon avowed herself to be better. Positively she felt able to stand the strain of a walk from her own closet to the studio of the Queen. Her elderly cheeks were painted, her wig reflected every possible credit upon her *perruquier*, the smile on her red lips was good to see.

The Queen was painting her flowers, her everlasting red roses.

The Duchess chattered gaily. She stopped presently, as hoofs clattered into the courtyard, and after a pause Ambrose and Ulric and Eric entered unannounced. The Duchess was outraged.

"This is an insult!" she said. "And—and when it comes from you, Ambrose——"

"We are from Rems, madam," said Ambrose. "It was as you said. The plot has failed."

"The plot!" the Duchess gasped. "What plot is that?"

"Your Grace's plot with D'Arolles," Ambrose said coolly. "We found the letter in your pocket; we have found other letters on the dead body of D'Arolles."

"The dead—dead body. Oh! I do not understand."

"D'Arolles is dead. The scheme of the juggled roses failed," said Ambrose. "Every man who emerged from Rems Cathedral had a red rose over his heart. Ah! your Grace turns pale. I will tell you presently how that was done. So sure of his position was Arnheim that he dared to lead the attack upon the Cathedral in person. I slew him with my own hand, and I glory in the deed."

The Duchess could say no more. She lay back half swooning in her chair, regarding the three travel-stained cavaliers between her half-closed eyes. The Queen had risen to her feet, pale and trembling, yet with a great resolution shining in her eyes. The easel had fallen to the floor, her foot had torn through the canvas, but she heeded it not.

"You have all fresh red roses," she said. "Show me how it was done."

"With pleasure, your Majesty. The first part you knew; the Duchess knows also. If I have your Majesty's permission to order a bowl of warm water——"

The Queen rang the bell with her own hands.

"I could deny you nothing," she cried. "You have saved my happiness and my throne, and may God bless you for it! Rene, a bowl of warm water here."

The water came, and Ambrose solemnly soaked his rose in the clear fluid. As deliberately and solemnly the others proceeded to treat their flowers in similar fashion; and when the flowers were shaken, they came out a streaky, faded white.

"Will you explain the enigma?" the Queen asked, with a smile.

"I will, madam," Ambrose went on. "All

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the roses in the Cathedral were white. The wolves were ready for us. Rems had believed the slanders. We caught D'Arolles as he was about to leave the Cathedral. We exposed his scheme; and in the cloisters someone killed that arch-fiend. . . . When we left the Cathedral, we all wore red roses."

"Still I don't quite see," said the Queen.

"Madam," Ambrose said solemnly, "they were red, and white, and red again, and the last red was the crimson, treacherous blood of a traitor."

He laid the rose at the Queen's feet; so did Ulric and Eric. Her face was pale and agitated; she spoke no word for some time. Then she held out her two hands.

"My friends," she said brokenly. "My friends, if ever I could——"

"Madam," Ambrose said shortly—"madam, the Duchess de Mignon has swooned."

THE BALLADE OF BROWN MINOR.

THE burden of thy labour! To pursue
A timorous familiarity
With divers doings (more or less untrue)
Of gentlefolk who lived and died B.C.
To hear the plaint of pale Penelope,
With Sisyphus in patience to perspire,
To mourn Anchises' pious progeny,—
Is this the end of any boy's desire?

The measure of thy comfort! To eschew
Thy pleasant sport for that of A and B,
Who, happy wights! had nothing else to do
Save walk, or race, or practise usury.
To feign that x denotes a pound of tea,
Or pint of beer, or yard of copper wire,
With surds ***irrational*** to disagree,—
Is this the end of any boy's desire?

The burden of thy shame! To kill anew
Tongues long deceased! To use no care to see
That διὰ, μέτα govern cases two,
But not so ***palam, clam, cum, ex*** and ***e.***
The sources of the Danube and the Dee
In simulated interest to inquire,
To sum a series to infinity,
Is this the end of any boy's desire?

Envoy.

Examiner, when dawns thy day for me,
If thou shalt ask the questions I require,
Then will I say, in gratitude to thee,
This is the end of every boy's desire!

GUNBY HADATH.

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The Argan Forest

Some Notes of Life & Sport there

By S. L. Bensusan.

IF you will turn to a good map of Morocco, and look down the Atlantic coast of the country as far as Mogador, you will find the Argan Forest lying behind Sidi Mogod's Picture City. I do not know its extent, and writing as I do, very many miles from books of reference, there are no means to hand by which I may find out. But I know that I have journeyed for three days through the forest, meeting nobody save when my path crossed one of the great tracks that lead to the port of Saffi, to the great southern capital Marakesch, or the unexplored country of the Sus and the outlying desert. For miles and miles one meets the beautiful argan tree that gives the forest its name, a tree so precious and so rare that no part of it is wasted. Goats eat the young and tender shoots, camels do not disdain the higher branches, the trunk is very valuable, the fruit yields the argan oil that flavours so much Moorish cookery, and when this has been extracted, the dry residue is valued for feeding cattle. The argan tree is seldom met outside Morocco, and the area it favours here is comparatively limited. It grows to a very great age—a matter of centuries, though reliable statistics are hard to secure; and it is very beautiful, with branches starting low down on the trunk, and a mass of foliage that provides welcome shade for the fierce wild boars as well as the few travellers who pass through the forest away from the beaten tracks.

Along the regular forest roads the procession of travellers could hardly be more picturesque. From Marakesch to the south the camel caravans take European goods that have found their way to the southern capital's bazaars; from the south to the north the processions are more striking still. Bedouins, the real nomads from the unexplored regions of the Ouad Draa, bring vast flocks of sheep and goats destined for the city market; from the Sus, less remote but quite as inaccessible, traders go laden with olive oil or brass and copper work from Tarudant. Sometimes the slave-dealers pass, too, quite unmolested, for their trade is not forbidden in Morocco. In days not so far remote they were accustomed to bring child slaves packed in panniers on mules and camels, two in a pannier, and it was no uncommon thing for one of the pair to succumb to the fatigue, and for the living and the dead to pass the day tied together. This horror, and others that need not be dwelt upon here, are slightly abated to-day, for, since the French took Timbuctoo, slaves have become more rare and consequently more valuable, so it pays their masters well to bring them to market in good physical condition. You can get many interesting views from some little eminences in the forest overlooking one of the rough tracks that does duty for a road. You hear the tinkle of the goats' bells as the Bedouin flocks pass along, and see the thin, athletic master of the flock in his scanty robes of blue walking by the side of his wife and children, who ride on mule or donkey, while a camel follows sulkily, laden with all their household goods—a tent, a few pots and pans, and some sheepskin coverings. Or the thin, wiry Susi traders will pass, driving their mules along and singing Shillah love-songs through the hours of fire when the larks fear to face the sun, and only the cuckoo breaks the silence of the wood. The *rekass*, or native letter-carrier, must not be overlooked, for he is one of the most striking figures that the forest shelters. It is his duty to carry the mails and to walk by day and night, his thin, sinewy legs bare, a staff in his hand for support and protection,

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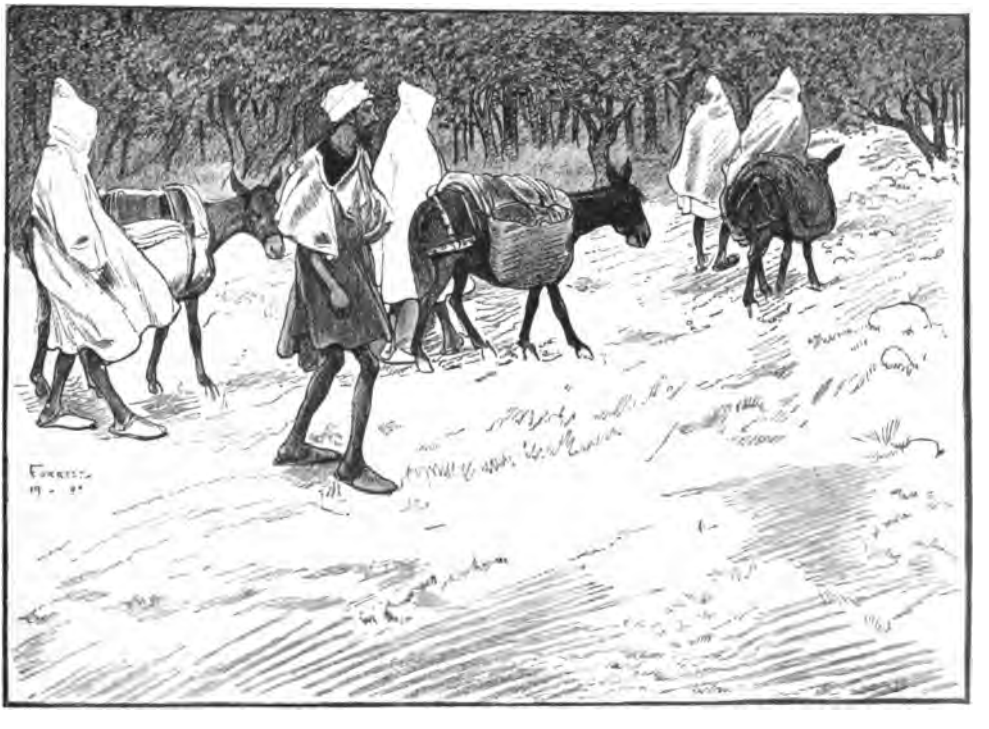
a lamp at his girdle to scare *djinns* and other evil spirits that walk in darkness, and in his wallet some bread and some *haschish* or *kief*. The little pipe filled with hemp speedily makes him oblivious of the troubles of the way. Hunger ceases to gnaw, and thirst to weigh him down; he "eats the miles," seldom pausing to sleep, and passing to his destination like a man in a dream. "Illegitimate men," enemies of Our Lord the Sultan, allow the *rekass* to pass through their territory even when they would not let a single muleteer go through with his life; they have a certain respect for letters, but no knowledge of them, and so the *rekass* plies his trade in comparative security, and, passing through the Argan Forest, will give you news of far-off cities and men if you will lend him one of your horse's stirrups that he may get some assistance on the road. He will not stop for you or any man; and when he sleeps, he ties a lighted candle to his foot, that he may be effectually roused before many hours have passed.

In the forest, the lover of flowers and trees will find an inexhaustible feast. The first rains and the latter rains give a carpet of flowers to every glade, countless bushes yield flowers of shape and colour and perfume unknown to us. At times when the iris flowers, and in places where the oleanders "flush the bed of silent torrents," the festival of colour finds no parallel with anything we know in England. I have to remember the plains of Dothan, in Palestine, in their late April aspect to recall a rival to the panorama that the Argan Forest spreads. I cannot name a tithe of the beautiful flowers and bushes that fill the forest; suffice it to recall the retam, the wild thyme, the oleander, and certain species of the rhododendron family.

In parts where the forest is cultivated—that is to say, on the outskirts of native villages—the orchards contribute their bright notes of colour to the scene, and the scarlet of the pomegranate shining amid the cool greenery of fig trees is not readily to be forgotten. Round the villages, too, with their *tapia* walls and sparkling white saint's shrine, there are generally a few fields of corn, ready in late April for the primitive sickle of the husbandman. The forest is full of surprises. It has glades that recall Bushey Park, and districts that remind the traveller of the most extravagantly beautiful districts of the Western Highlands of Scotland; and there are not wanting wilder and grander places that will make the sportsman think of the wildest parts of Sutherlandshire. Nature



PROCESSION OF TRADERS ALONG THE FOREST ROADS.

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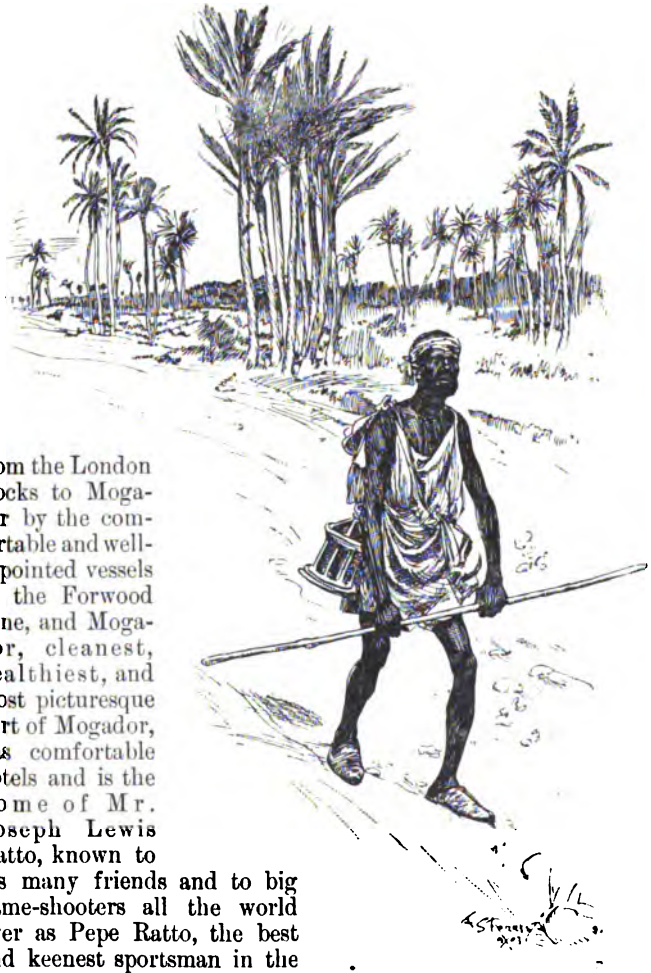
seems to have reserved specimens of her most successful work for the benefit of the Argan Forest, and she has set them in a region of perpetual summer; for the rainy season is very short, and the coldest day of the year there would be greeted kindly if it came to our English June.

At present the Argan Forest is almost unknown, though there is a weekly service from the London Docks to Mogador by the comfortable and well-appointed vessels of the Forwood Line, and Mogador, cleanest, healthiest, and most picturesque port of Mogador, has comfortable hotels and is the home of Mr. Joseph Lewis Ratto, known to his many friends and to big game-shooters all the world over as Pepe Ratto, the best and keenest sportsman in the Sultan's dominions, and one of the most entertaining men. A wonderful shot with rifle or shot-gun, a keen and tireless teacher, and a most accurate observer of animal life, Mr. Ratto has killed thousands of the wild boars that infest the Argan Forest, and mere mention of his name brings me to the consideration of the forest in its sporting aspect. If there are places within a fortnight's journey of London where so great a variety of sport can be obtained, where big game serve to break the monotony of the pursuit of fur and feather, I shall be delighted to hear of them. So far as my sporting experiences at home and abroad have taught me, the Argan Forest has no rival that is so accessible to the public. Germany and Austria have their forests where the deer and the wild boar may be pursued successfully, but they are private, guarded by foresters and game-keepers, inaccessible to you and to me. The Argan Forest is quite different; if you can track the boar, you may shoot him. If you can race the gazelle over the plains beyond Sheshoua, or the great bustard over the level lands that stretch to the village of Sidi Moktar, they are yours, *nemine contradicente*. The forest teems with game, and you are heartily welcome to your share of it, the size of that share being regulated solely by your capacity for tracking accurately and shooting straight. Before I deal with the shooting, it is fair to remember that the fishing is also excellent, that the tiny, half-known streams that flow through remote parts of the forest are full of trout and are worthy the attention of the flyfisher who knows the Stour, the Avon, the Itchen in England, or Tay and Tweed further north. The otter haunts the streams and may be hunted as he is hunted in Devonshire.



THE RERASS

He must be a very fortunate or very dissatisfied sportsman who can grumble at the fare provided for him in the Argan Forest. There are sand-grouse in plenty, and countless coveys of partridges. Pigeons and stock-doves are present in abundance, though it is necessary to be sure that the pigeons are not sacred to the *zouia* or saint's shrine of some neighbouring village. I had the misfortune to shoot a sacred pigeon once, and straightway became very unpopular with the headmen. Apologies and explanations were necessary. Sparrow-hawks are often sacred in Morocco, just as they used to be in Egypt when they were sacred to Horus; but nobody

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would wish to shoot a sparrow-hawk, so the sacred character does not matter much. The lesser bustard is not uncommon, and may be secured with a shot-gun; but the great bustard is harder to get, despite his size, for he rises a long way off, and a rifle is required to bring him down. The flavour of the big bird—it is as big as a turkey and often weighs twenty-five pounds and more—is by no means unpleasant. The natives do not eat it much, for they can seldom kill one in the manner prescribed by their religion, and, indeed, they have no great liking for game. I have seen them reject stock-doves and partridges as food unfit for True Believers. Perhaps the birds of the forest owe their immunity to native contempt, so there is no occasion to regret it; for if the natives have no guns, they can bring down game with a sort of boomerang in most attractive style, and when they secure a gun, they shoot their quarry sitting. "It is so much easier," said my Moorish servant naïvely when I remonstrated with him. "Should I waste your cartridges on birds flying in the air?"

There are many hares in the forest, and their numbers show no signs of diminishing, though the natives pursue them very eagerly. Shooting one day in the woods round the village of Hanchen, I was assisted by about thirty beaters. They drove birds to me well enough; but so soon as they started a hare, one and all would dash off in pursuit, and I had to hold my hand or run the risk of bagging a beater. Persuasion, explanation, and abuse being equally ineffective, I reconciled myself to allowing every hare to pass unchallenged save by the excited attendants.

Jackals and hyænas frequent the forest in all parts, the former being the more common. On almost any night they can be heard howling round the forest camp, but they will not come within gunshot unless hunger has pressed them very hard. Lynx and porcupine are to be found, and porcupine hunts are organised. The native method is simple and effective. A lair is found and closed, a couple of men stand by it armed with sticks. The surrounding cover is then carefully beaten, and the unfortunate porcupine, who is never far away, makes hurriedly for home, to be despatched on the closed threshold. Deer, small as the roedeer of Scotland, scour the plains in small companies, and to get within shot you must gallop and fire from your horse's back. This

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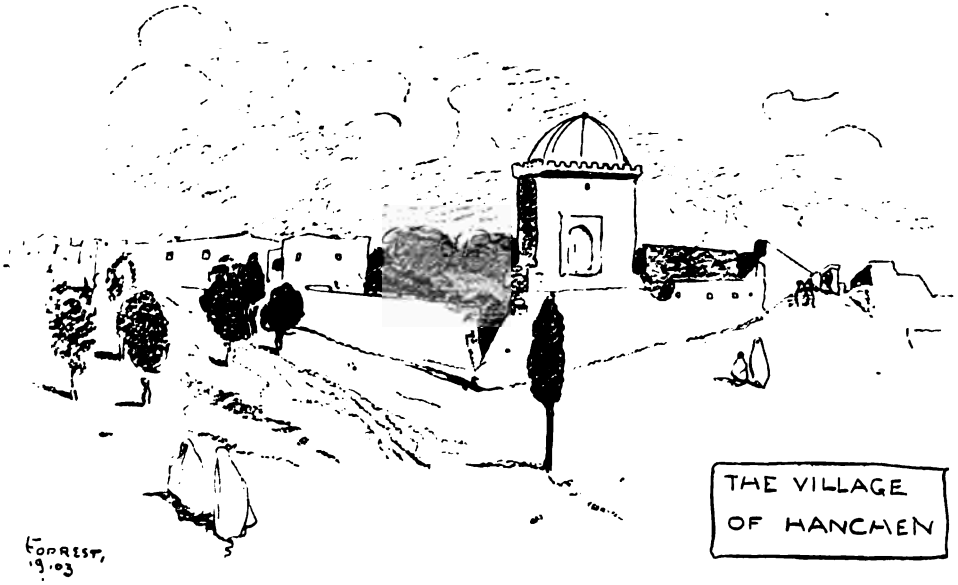
procedure is beyond my modest capacity with horse or rifle, and I am well content to leave the deer to better men.

But when all has been said of the Argan Forest, its wild boar hunting remains the sport *par excellence*. Even the occasional incursion of a leopard from the Atlas cannot stir the pulse of the practised boar-hunter as it is stirred when he resumes the track of a wily tusker that has baffled him by crossing a river, or doubling on his own tracks, or going up stream for a mile or more. The stalker of red deer in our own Highland forests, or the hunter in the country of the Devon and Somerset, can guess the joy of the boar-hunter; but whereas the cornered deer makes but a poor fight, a genuine tusker can die fighting in a manner that wins the applause of his enemies.



Boar-hunting is no work for amateurs. It has been brought to a state of perfection by Mr. Ratto, after thirty years' close study of the animals; and there are days when whole villages join in the driving, and there is a very big bag. This corresponds to deer-driving in the Highland forests, and is an expensive and wasteful process that destroys too many animals and disturbs a very large area of the forest.

Just as a good deer-stalker likes to find and track his quarry, so the good boar-hunter likes to do his work alone; indeed, he is content to follow the track for days together, masking the feet of his boar so carefully run across other tracks can save the pursued animal. Mr. Ratto never leaves his boar; days, weeks, and even months have been spent on the track of some, whose cunning is almost human, and in the end their tusks have been added to the redoubtable sportsman's collection.

A pack of boar-hounds is a necessity, but the dogs are cross-bred mongrels of varying sizes and shapes; some are required for thick bushes, others for more open ground, while one and all must be in a splendid state of health, for the boar's tusks inflict wounds that would be fatal in an air less pure, or to blood in poor condition. Attempts have been made to introduce fox-hounds, but no pure-bred pack survives, or is even able to do all the work that the mongrels succeed in doing.

Boar-driving is quite rare, and is only arranged for the benefit of some distinguished visitor, just as deer-drives are arranged for King Edward in the forests of some of his Highland friends.

The best sport comes to the tracker, who needs a wiry frame, a keen, clear eye, a knowledge of the habits of boars, and so perfect an acquaintance with the forest that he can discount a long *détour* made by a retreating boar and go straight to the spot where it must emerge from ground where only the strongest dog can hope to follow it. He must wear strong gaiters of some soft material that does not make a noise when the bushes brush it; boots as soft as the nature of the ground will permit. He must never carry his gun at full-cock, or

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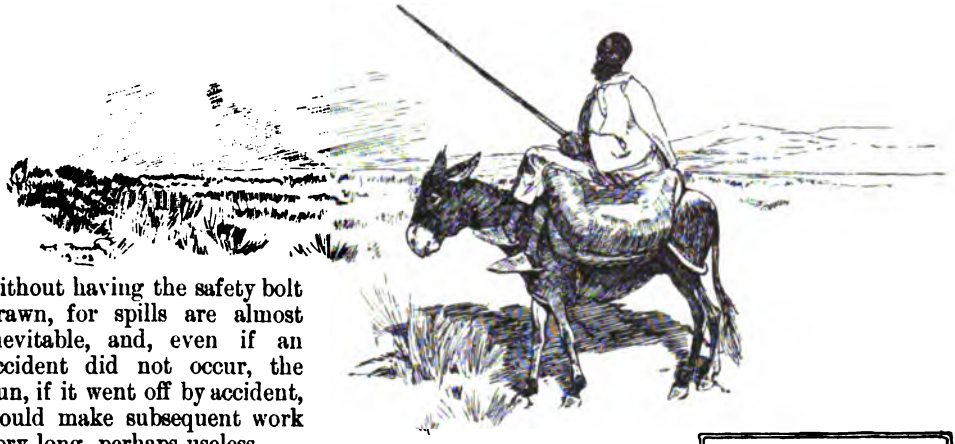
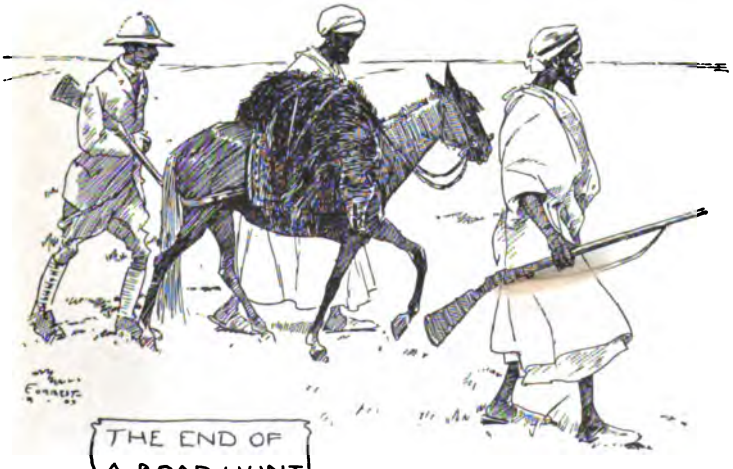


A Tracker of the Boar in the Argan forest

without having the safety bolt drawn, for spills are almost inevitable, and, even if an accident did not occur, the gun, if it went off by accident, would make subsequent work very long, perhaps useless.

Most of the boars hunted in the Argan Forest were born and bred there, and have grown into condition at the expense of the farmers' crops, the maize being a delicacy that will draw them from places miles distant when the grain is sweet and green. Occasionally a few boars come down from the Atlas mountains, and these, being rather different in their habits from the forest boars, put all but the most experienced tracker in difficulties. One and all, the boars are nervous and suspicious; they have the keenest hearing, and only when they are actually eating does their hearing fail them. Unless the weather is wet, they always feed at night. They will travel for miles through scrub that is almost impassable, will run rather than fight; but when they turn to bay, will do great execution. So keen are their hearing and scent that they must always be followed against the wind; and when the boar and sow are together, the gallant male sends his companion away and stays to fight, that she may not be pursued. If the poor tusker knew his business better, he would not take this precaution, for no sportsman would shoot a sow. In the summer the solitaire—that is, the boar who has left the herd—chooses a moist, sandy place on high ground; in the winter he selects some hollow or gorge where the wind cannot reach him, and he can enjoy the warmth that does not fail in the forest at any time of the year. And if on your journey through the wood you come across a large expanse of brush, with one or two argan trees at great intervals, there is a good chance that you will find a tusker at his ease under one of them. Do not go by yourself to find out—let the dogs investigate for you.



THE END OF A BOAR HUNT

I must hold my pen, for this article is not written in praise of boar-hunting, but in the hope of introducing many new friends to the delightful forest of South Morocco, where every sport that a man can desire awaits him. Even for the people to whom sport has no special appeal, the Argan Forest never fails in attractions, and an invalid can come back to renewed vigorous life in the shadow of the famous Palm Tree House without taking gun or rod in hand.

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THE CAREER OF JOAN CARTHEW:

THE ADVENTURES OF A GIRL WHO HAD NOTHING AND WANTED EVERYTHING.

By Mrs. C. N. WILLIAMSON.*

No. III.—THE TENANTS OF ROSENEATH PARK.

JOAN had no difficulty in selling the *Titania*, for Lady John Bevan, to a Swiss millionaire, the proprietor of a popular chocolate, who was disporting himself on the Riviera that winter. The yacht was to be delivered to him at Corsica, so that when the charming Miss Mordaunt and her chaperon steamed out of Nice Harbour, none of those who bade them farewell had to know that the *Titania* was to be disposed of. If they found out afterwards, it did not matter much to Joan. After her the Deluge.

The girl had grown fond of Lady John Bevan, and could not bear to exchange her friend's warm affection and gratitude for contempt. Therefore she made up a pretty little fiction about an unexpected summons to America, and parted from Lady John with mutual regret at Ajaccio. Joan's one grief in this connection was that Miss Mordaunt would scarcely be able to keep her promise to write from New York; but this grief was only one of the rain-drops in that "deluge" which had to fall after the vanishing of the American heiress.

If she had been prudent, Joan might have come out of this adventure with a small fortune after sending Tommy Mellis his share of the spoil; but she had been intoxicated with success, and had spent lavishly, as money came from the sale of the shares. She made a good commission on the "deal" with the yacht, which she sold for a somewhat larger sum than Lady John had asked; but where a less generous young person might have closed the episode with thousands, Joan Carthew had only hundreds. She had also, however, many smart dresses, some jewellery, and the memory of an exciting experience. Besides, the money she kept had been got easily, in addition to the joy of her adventure.

It had been in the girl's mind, perhaps, that she might, as Miss Mordaunt, capture a fortune and a title; but in this regard, and this only, the episode of the *Titania* had proved a failure. She had had plenty of proposals, to be sure; but the men who were rich were either too old, too ugly, or too vulgar to suit the fastidious young woman who called the world her oyster; and the titles laid at her feet were all sadly in need of the gilding which a genuine American heiress might have supplied for the sake of becoming a Russian princess or a French *duchesse*.

So Miss Mordaunt disappeared from the brilliant world where she had glittered like a star; and at about the same time, Miss Joan Carthew (who had nothing to conceal) appeared at her old quarters in Woburn Place. She went back there for two reasons; indeed, Joan had bought her experience of life too dearly to do anything without a reason. The first was because she wished to lie hid for awhile, spending no unnecessary money until the twilight of uncertainty should brighten into the dawn of inspiration and show her the next step on the ladder which she was determined to mount. The second reason was that the landlady—a quite exceptional person for a landlady—had been kind, and Joan desired to reward her.

If the girl had not gone back to Woburn Place, her whole future might have been different. But—she did go back, and arrived in the midst of a crisis. Since Joan had vanished, some months ago, bad luck had come into the house and finally opened the door for the bailiff.

Joan found the landlady in tears; but to explain the fulness of the girl's sympathy, the landlady must be described.

In the first place, she *was* a lady; and she was young and pretty, though a widow. Her husband had been the Honourable Richard Fitzpatrick, the scapegrace son of a penniless Irish viscount. "Dishonourable Dick," as he was sometimes nicknamed behind his

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back, had gone to Australia to make his fortune, had naturally failed, but had succeeded in marrying an exceedingly pretty girl, an orphan, with ten thousand pounds of her own. He had brought her to England, had spent most of her money on the racecourse, and would have spent the rest, had it not occurred to him that it would be good sport to do a little fighting in South Africa. He had volunteered, and soon after died of enteric.

Meanwhile, the Honourable Mrs. Fitzpatrick was at a boarding-house in Woburn Place, where the landlord and landlady were so kind to her that she gladly lent them several hundred pounds, not knowing yet that she had only a few other hundreds left out of her little fortune.

Suddenly the blow fell. Within three days Marian Fitzpatrick learned that she was a widow, that her dead husband had employed the short interval of their married life in getting rid of almost everything she had; and that, her landlord and landlady being bankrupt, she could not hope for the return of the three-hundred-pound loan she had made them.

It was finally arranged, as the best thing to be done, that she should take over the lease of the boarding-house, and try to get back what she had lost, by "running" the establishment herself.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick had just shouldered this somewhat incongruous burden, when Joan Carthew had been attracted to the house by the brightness of the gilt lettering over the door, and the pretty, fresh curtains in the windows. Joan was nineteen, and Marian Fitzpatrick twenty-three. The two had been drawn to one another with the first meeting of their eyes. When, after a few weeks' acquaintance, the girl had been told the young widow's story, her interest and sympathy were keenly aroused, for Joan's heart was not hard except to the rich, most of whom she conceived to be less deserving, if more fortunate, than herself. Now, when she came back, fresh from her triumphant campaign on the *Côte d'Azur*, to hear that things had gone from bad to worse, all the

"'Good-bye. I hope you'll enjoy the sea air at dear Brighton.'"

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latent chivalry in her really generous nature was aroused.

Joan was tall as a young goddess brought up on the heights of Olympus, instead of at a French boarding-school. Despite the hardships and wretchedness of her childhood, she was strong in body and mind and spirit, with the strength of perfect nerves and a splendid vitality. Marian Fitzpatrick, broken by disappointment, and worn by months of anxiety, was fragile and white as a lily which has been bent by savage storms, and the sight of her small, pale face and big, sad, brown eyes fired the girl with an almost fierce determination to assume the *rôle* of protector.

"I've got money," she reflected, in mental defiance of the Fate with whom she had waged war since childish days, "and I can make more when this is gone. I suppose I'm a fool, but I don't care a rap. I'm going to help Marian Fitzpatrick, and perhaps make her fortune, as I mean to make my own. But just for the present, mine can wait, and hers can't."

Aloud, she asked Marian what sum would tide her over present difficulties. Two hundred and fifty pounds, it appeared, were needed. Joan promptly volunteered to lend, on one condition, but she was cut short before she had time to name it.

"Condition or no condition, you dear girl, I can't let you do it," sobbed Marian. "I'm perfectly sure I could never pay. I'm in a quicksand and bound to sink. Nobody can pull me out."

"I can," said Joan; "and in doing it, I'll show you how to pay me. You just listen to what I have to say, and don't interrupt. When I get an inspiration, I tell you, it's worth hearing, and I've got one now. What I want you to do is to give up trying to manage this house. You're too young and pretty and soft-hearted for a landlady, and you haven't the talent for it, though you have plenty in other ways, and one is, to be charming. My inspiration will show you how best to utilise that talent."

Then Joan talked on, and at first Marian was shocked and horrified; but in the end the force of the girl's extraordinary magnetism and self-confidence subdued her. She ceased to protest. She even laughed, and a stain of rose colour came back to her cheeks. It would be very awful and alarming, and perhaps wicked, to do what Joan Carthew proposed, but it would be tremendously exciting and interesting; and there was enough youthful love of mischief left in her to enjoy an adventure with a kind of fearful joy, especially when all the responsibility was shouldered by another stronger than herself.

The first thing to do towards the carrying out of the great plan was to get someone to manage the boarding-house in Mrs. Fitzpatrick's place. This was difficult, for competent and honest managers, male or female, were not to be found at registry-offices, like cooks; but Joan was (or thought she was) equal to this emergency as well as others. She sorted out from the dismal rag-bag of her early Brighton experiences the memory of a wonderful woman who had done something to make life tolerable for her when she was the forlorn drudge of Mrs. Boyle's lodging-house at 12, Seafoam Terrace.

This wonderful woman had been one of two sisters who also kept a lodging-house in Seafoam Terrace. The Misses Witt owned the place, consequently it was not improbable that they were still to be found there, after these seven years; and as they had not always agreed together, it seemed possible that the younger Miss Witt (the clever and nice one, who had given occasional cakes and bulls'-eyes to Joan in those bad old days) might be prevailed upon to accept an independent position, with a salary, in London.

Joan had always promised herself that, when she was rich and prosperous, she would sweep into the house of her bondage like a young princess, and bestow favours upon little Minnie Boyle, whom she had loved. But Lady Thorndyke had not wished her adopted daughter even to remember the sordid past; and after the death of her benefactress, the girl had not until lately been in a position to undertake the *rôle* of beneficent princess. Even now, to be sure, she was not rich, but she swam on the tide of success and she had at least the air of dazzling prosperity. She dressed herself in a way to make Mrs. Boyle grovel, and bought a first-class ticket, one Friday afternoon, for Brighton. She took her seat in an empty carriage, and hardly had she done so when a man got in. It was George Gallon; and if he had wished to get out again on recognising his travelling companion, there would not have been time for him to do so, as at that moment the train began to move out of the station.

These two had not seen each other since the eventful morning when Joan had resigned her position as Mr. Gallon's secretary. She was not sure whether she were sorry or glad to see him now, but the situation had its

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"Mrs. Fitzpatrick and Mercy Milton were surrounded by other visitors when Sir Anthony Pendered was announced."

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dramatic element. George spoke stiffly, and Joan responded with malicious cordiality. Knowing nothing of her identity with Grierson Mordaunt's brilliant niece, long pent-up curiosity forced the man to ask questions as to where she had been and what she had been doing.

"I have an interest in a London boarding-house, and am going to Brighton to try and engage a manageress," Joan deigned to reply, with a twinkle under her long eyelashes. "I forgot that you would have kept on the old place at Brighton. I suppose you are going down for the week-end?"

George admitted grimly that this was the case, and as Joan would give only tantalising glimpses of her doings in the last few months, and seemed inclined to put impish questions about the office she had left, he took refuge in a newspaper. Joan calmly read a novel, and not another word was exchanged until the train had actually come to a stop in the Brighton station. "Oh! by the way," the girl exclaimed then, as if on a sudden thought. "It was I who got hold of those Clerios I believe you had an idea of buying in very cheap. I knew you could afford to pay well if you wanted them. One gets these little tips, you know, in an office like yours. That's why I snapped at your two guineas a week. Good-bye. I hope you'll enjoy the sea air at dear Brighton."

Before George Gallon could find breath to answer, she was gone, and he was left to anathematise the hand-luggage which must be given to a porter. By the time it was disposed of, the impertinent young woman had disappeared. But Joan's little impulsive stab had made Gallon more her enemy than ever, and perhaps the day might come when she would regret the small satisfaction of the moment.

She had no thought of this, however, and drove in the gayest of moods to Seafoam Terrace, where she stopped her cab before the door of No. 12. There, however, she met disappointment. Her first inquiry was answered by the news that Mrs. Boyle had died of influenza in the winter, and the house had passed into other hands. The servant could tell her nothing of Minnie; but the new mistress called down from over the baluster, where she had been listening to the conversation, that she believed the little girl had been taken in by the two Misses Witt next door.

Death had stolen from Joan a gratification of which she had dreamed for years. Mrs. Boyle could never now be forced to regret past unkindnesses to a young fairy princess who had emerged like a splendid butterfly from a despised chrysalis; but Minnie was left, and Joan had been genuinely fond of Minnie. She had now, therefore, a double incentive in hurrying to the house next door.

The nice Miss Witt herself answered the ring, and Joan had a few words with her alone. She would be delighted to accept a good position in London; and it was true that Minnie Boyle was there. She had taken compassion on the child, who was as penniless and friendless as Joan had been when last in Seafoam Terrace; but the elder Miss Witt wished to send the little girl to an orphanage, and the difference of opinion, and Minnie's presence in the house, led to constant discussion. "The only trouble is," said the kindly woman, "that if I leave, sister will send the little creature away."

"She won't, because I shall take Minnie off her hands," retorted Joan, with the promptness of a sudden decision. "Do let me see the poor pet."

Minnie was nine years old, so small that she did not look more than six, and so pathetically pretty that Joan saw at once how she might be fitted into the great plan. She could do even more for the child now than she had expected to do; and because the little one was poor and alone in the world, as she herself had been, Joan's heart grew more than ever warm to her playmate of the past. She made friends with Minnie, who had completely forgotten her, and so bewitched the child with her beauty, her kindness, and her smart clothes that Minnie was enchanted with the prospect of going away with such a grand young lady.

"I used to know some nice fairy stories when I was very, very little," said the child. "This is like one of them."

"I told you those fairy stories," returned Joan. "Now I am going to make them come true."

* * * * *

About the first of May, when Cornwall was at its loveliest, everybody within twenty miles of Toragel (a village famed for its beauty and its antiquity, as artists and tourists know) was delighted to hear that Lord Trelinnen's place was let at last, and to most desirable tenants. Lord Trelinnen was elderly, and too poor to live at Roseneath Park, therefore Toragel had long ceased to be interested in him; but it was intensely interested in the new people, despite the fact that their advent was the second excitement

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which had stirred the fortunate village within the last few months.

The first had been the home-coming of Sir Anthony Pendered, the richest man in the county, who had volunteered for the Boer war, raised a regiment, and, when peace was declared, had come back to Torr Court covered with honours. He was only a knight, and had been given his title because of a valuable new explosive which he had discovered and made practicable. He had grown enormously rich through his various inventions, and, after an adventurous life of some thirty-eight years, had bought a handsome place near his native village, Toragel. At first the county had looked at him askance, but the South African affair had settled all aristocratic doubts in his favour. About five months before the letting of Roseneath Park, he had been enthusiastically received by all classes, and was still a hero in everybody's eyes; nevertheless, the first excitement had had time to die down, and the county people and the "best society" of the village united with more or less hidden eagerness to know what poor old Lord Trelinnen's tenants would be like.

The Trelinnen pew in the pretty church of Toragel was next to that where Sir Anthony Pendered was usually (and his maiden sister always) to be seen on Sunday mornings. The first Sunday after the new people's arrival, the church was full; but service began, and still the Trelinnen pew was empty. After all, the tenants of Roseneath Park (whom nobody had seen yet) had come only yesterday. Perhaps they would not appear till next Sunday; but just as the congregation was sadly resigning itself to this conclusion, there was a slight rustle at the door. The first hymn was being sung, therefore eyes were able to turn without too much levity; and it is wonderful how much and how far an eye can see by turning almost imperceptibly, particularly if it be the eye of a woman.

Two ladies and a little girl were shown to the Trelinnen pew. Both ladies were young; the elder could not have been more than twenty-three, the younger looked scarcely nineteen. Both were in half-mourning; both were beautiful. They were, in fact, no other than the Honourable Mrs. Fitzpatrick, and her sisters, Miss Mercy and Mary Milton, these latter being known in other circles as Joan Carthew and little Minnie Boyle.

The child, who appeared to be about six years old, was charmingly dressed, and extraordinarily good during the service. As for her elders, they were almost aggravatingly devout, scarcely raising their lovely eyes from their prayer-books, and never glancing about at their neighbours, not even at Sir Anthony Pendered, who looked at the two more than he had ever been known to look at any other women. This was saying a good deal, because he was by no means a misanthrope, although he was forty and had remained a bachelor. It was rumoured that he wished to marry, if he could find a wife to suit him, though meanwhile he was content enough with the society of his sister, who was far from encouraging any matrimonial aspirations.

When Marian and Joan and Minnie were driven back to Roseneath Park (in the perfect victoria and by the splendid horses which advertised the solid bank balance they did not possess), the two "elder sisters" talked over their impressions.

Minnie played with a French doll, that somewhat resembled herself in her new white frock, with her quantities of yellow hair. Marian, leaning back on a cushioned sofa, waiting for the luncheon-gong to sound, was prettier and more distinguished-looking than she had ever been; while Joan, as Mercy Milton, would scarcely have been recognised by those who knew her best. Marian's maiden name had really been Milton, and "Mercy" had been selected to fit the picture for which Joan had chosen to sit. Her beautiful, gold-brown hair was parted meekly in the middle and brought down over the ears, finishing with a simple coil in the nape of her white neck. She was dressed as plainly as a young nun, and had the air of qualifying for a saint.

"Well, dear, what did you think of him?" she inquired of Marian.

"Of whom?" asked Mrs. Fitzpatrick, blushing.

"Oh, if you are going to be innocent! Well, then, of the distinguished gentleman whose name and qualifications I showed you in the *Mayfair Budget* a few days after I got back to England and you. The *eligible parti*, in fact, whose residence near Toragel is responsible for our choice of abode."

"Joan! *Don't* put it like that!"

"'Mercy,' if you please, not Joan. And I've found out exactly what I wanted to know. Your reception of my brutal frankness has shown me that you like him. So far, so good."

"I may like him, but that won't help your plan. Oh, Jo—Mercy, I mean, I do feel such a wretch! That man looks so honest

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and frank and nice, and he could hardly take his eyes off you in church. If he knew what frauds we are!"

"*You* are not a fraud, and it is you with whom he is concerned, or it will be, as I'll soon show him, if necessary. Your name *is* Fitzpatrick; you are a widow; we are sisters—in affection. You haven't a fib to tell; you've only got to be charming."

"But it's you he admires. I told you it would be so. If one of us is to be Lady——"

"'Sh!" said Joan; and the gong boomed musically for lunch.

Had it not been for the existence of innocent little Minnie, the county might not have accepted the lovely sisters as readily as it did. Joan had thought of that, as she thought of most things; and Minnie, the *protégée* of charity, was distinctly an asset. "A very good prop," as Joan mentally called her, in theatrical slang, which she had learned, perhaps, from her long-vanished mother.

"'Don't cry, dear; don't worry,' said Joan."

The presence of Minnie in the feminine household gave a kind of pathetic, domestic grace, which appealed even to tradespeople; and tradespeople were extremely important in Joan's calculations.

She had obtained credentials, on starting on her new career, in a characteristic way. Miss Jenny Mordaunt wrote to Lady John Bevan, asking for a letter of introduction for a great friend of hers, the Honourable Mrs. Fitzpatrick, to the solicitors who had charge of Lord Trelinnen's affairs, as Mrs.

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Fitzpatrick wanted to take Roseneath Park. Lady John gladly managed this. Mrs. Fitzpatrick called upon her, and she was charmed. She had known the "Dishonourable Dick" slightly, years ago, had heard that he had married an heiress, and wondered that he had been tolerated by so sweet a creature as this. Lady John offered one or two letters of introduction to old friends in Cornwall, and they were gratefully accepted. As the friends were not intimate, and as Lady John detested the country, except when hunting or shooting was in question, there was little danger that she would inopportunely appear on the scene and recognise the saintly Mercy Milton as the late Miss Mordaunt.

Everybody called on the fair, lilylike young widow and her very modest, retiring, unmarried sister—everybody, that is, with the exception of Miss Pendered, who pleaded, when her brother urged, that she was too much of an invalid to call on new people. Soon, however, he boldly went by himself, excusing his sister with some tale of rheumatism which she would have indignantly resented. Mrs. Fitzpatrick and Mercy Milton were surrounded with other visitors when Sir Anthony Pendered was announced, and he was just in time to hear a glowing account of the orphaned sisters' "dear old Australian home," which Joan had learned by heart, partly from Marian's reminiscences, partly from a book.

"When father and mother died, little Minnie and I were the loneliest creatures you can imagine," the gentle Mercy was saying. "Dear Marian had just lost her husband, and so she wrote for us to join her. It is *so* nice having a home in the country again. We both felt we couldn't be happy without one, and we chose Cornwall because we thought it the loveliest county in England. We are very glad we did, now, for everybody has been *so* kind."

She might have added "and the tradespeople *so* trusting"; but on that subject she was silent, though she intended that they should go on trusting indefinitely. Indeed, thus far the scheme worked almost too easily to be interesting.

Sir Anthony Pendered outstayed the other visitors, and he stopped unconscionably long for a first call; but that was the fault of his hostesses, who made themselves so charming that the man lost count of time—and perhaps lost his head a little, also. At first it seemed that Marian's impression was right, and that, despite Mercy's retiring ways, it was the young girl who attracted him. This made Marian secretly sad; for when she had seen Sir Anthony looking up from his prayer-book in the adjoining pew, she had said in her heart, with a sigh: "How good he would be to a woman! How he would pet her and take care of her! To be his wife would be very different from——" but she had guiltily broken short that sentence in the midst.

Persuaded and fired by Joan, she had entered into this adventure. She had even laughed when Joan selected the neighbourhood of Toragel because a Society paper announced the advent of a particularly desirable bachelor. "You will be the prettiest and nicest woman in the county, of course; therefore, he will fall in love with you and propose. He will marry you; you will live happy ever after; and you will be able to pay all the debts that we shall have run up in the process of securing him," the girl had remarked. But now, when the "desirable bachelor" had become a living entity, and she felt her heart yearning towards him, Marian's conscience grew sore. Still, though she told herself that she could not carry out the plan and try to win Sir Anthony Pendered, it was a blow to see him prefer Joan.

The symptoms of his admiration were equally displeasing to the girl. She was deliberately effacing herself for this episode; while it lasted, she was to be merely the "power behind the throne." Knowing that she was more strikingly beautiful and brilliant than Marian Fitzpatrick, she had studied how to reduce her fascinations, that Marian might outshine her. Evidently she had not entirely succeeded; but during that first call of Sir Anthony's, she quickly, surreptitiously changed a diamond-ring from her right hand to the "engaged" finger of her left, flourished the newly adorned member under his eyes, and spoke, with a conscious simper, of "going back some day to Australia to live." Sir Anthony did not misunderstand, and as he had not yet tumbled over the brink of that precipice whence a man falls into love, he readjusted his inclinations. After all, Mrs. Fitzpatrick was as pretty, he thought, and certainly more sympathetic. He was glad that Minnie was her sister, and not her child. Though he had always said he would not care to marry a widow, this case was different from any that he had imagined. Mrs. Fitzpatrick had only been married a year or two when her husband died, and she had soon awakened from her girlish fancy for the man—so

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Miss Milton had guilelessly confided to him.

Thanks to this, and much further "guilelessness" of the same kind on the part of that meek maiden, Sir Anthony Pendered discovered, before the sisters had been for many weeks tenants of Roseneath Park, that he was deeply, passionately in love with Marian Fitzpatrick. Accordingly, he proposed one exquisite June afternoon, amid the ruins of a storied castle overhanging the sea. Joan had got up a picnic to this place expressly to give him the opportunity which she felt triumphantly sure he was seeking, and she was naturally annoyed with Marian when she discovered that the young widow had asked for "time to think it over."

"You little idiot! Why didn't you fall into his arms and say 'Yes—yes—*yes*'?" the girl demanded, in Marian's bedroom, when they had come home towards evening.

"Because I love him, and because I'm a fraud!" exclaimed Marian. "Oh! I know what you must think of me. I haven't played straight with you, either. You've done everything for me. I was to make this match; and the rent of this place, and our horses and carriages, the payment of all the tradespeople on whom we've been practically living depend on my catching the splendid 'fish' you've so cleverly landed for me. You've lent me money; and what you had left when we came here, you've been spending——"

"I've spread it like very thin butter on very thick bread, to make the hundreds look like thousands. To carry off a big *coup* like this, one must have *some* ready money," broke in Joan, with a queer little smile at her own cleverness, and the thought of where it would land her if Marian's "conscientious scruples" refused to be put to sleep. "We *shall* be in rather a scrape if you won't marry Sir Anthony—and you're made for each other, too. But never mind, we shall get out of it somehow. At worst, we can disappear."

"And leave everything unpaid, and let him and everybody know we are adventuresses!" exclaimed Marian, breaking into tears.

"Don't cry, dear; don't worry; and don't decide anything," said Joan. "I have an idea."

She induced Marian to go to bed and nurse the violent headache which the battle between heart and conscience had brought on. When it was certain that Mrs. Fitzpatrick would not appear again that evening, she sent a little note by hand to Sir Anthony, as fortunately Torr Court was the next estate to Roseneath Park. "Do come over at once. It is very important that I should see you," wrote the decorous Mercy.

Sir Anthony Pendered was in the midst of dinner when the communication arrived, and to his sister's disgust he begged her to excuse him, as it was necessary to go out immediately on pressing business.

"That adventuress has sent for you!" Ellen Pendered fiercely ejaculated. "She has got you completely in her net. I don't believe those three are sisters. They don't look in the least alike, and it is all very well to say an ignorant nurse spoiled the child's accent. I have heard her talk more like a Cockney than an Australian. I tell you there is something wrong, very wrong, about them all."

"I advise you not to tell anyone else, then," answered Anthony Pendered furiously —"that is, unless you wish to break off for ever with me. This afternoon I asked the 'adventuress,' as you dare to call her, to marry me, and she refused. I had to plead before she would even promise to think it over." With this he left his sister also to "think it over," and decide that, between two evils, it might be wise to choose the less.

Marian's lover could not guess why Marian's younger sister had sent for him, and his anxiety increased when he saw the gravity of the girl's face.

"Is Mar—is Mrs. Fitzpatrick ill?" he stammered.

"A little, because she is unhappy; but you can make her well again—if you choose," replied Joan inscrutably.

"Of course I choose!" he almost indignantly protested.

"Wait," said she, "and listen to what I have to say. Poor Marian is the victim of her own goodness and sweet nature; and because she swore to me that she would never tell the story of our past, she feels it would be wrong to marry you. I cannot let her suffer for Minnie and me, so I am now going to tell you myself. But on this condition—if you do decide that you want her for your wife in spite of all, you will never once mention the subject to her. I will inform her that you know the truth and that she is not to speak of it to you. Is that a bargain?"

"Yes; but you needn't tell me the story unless you like. I'm sure *she* is not to blame for anything," replied the man, who was now thoroughly in love with Marian, even to the point of wondering what he had ever seen in Mercy.

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"Certainly it is not she; but as she thinks it is, it amounts to the same thing. The facts are these: Dear, good Marian took pity on Minnie and me in a London boarding-house, where we chanced to meet after her widowhood. She had decided to come here to live, because she longed for the country, but had not meant to take as grand a house as this, as she had just found out that her dead husband had spent most of her fortune. I implored her to bring Minnie and me to her new home, and give me a good chance of making a rich marriage by introducing us as her sisters. She was rather a 'swell'—at least, she had married an 'Honourable,' and we were nobodies. The poor darling finally consented to handicap herself with us. I had a little money, too, which had—er—come to me through a lucky investment, and I was so anxious to live at Roseneath Park that I made Marian (who is most unbusinesslike) believe that together we would have enough to take the place. I am supposed to be practical, and so the management of everything has been left to me. I have paid scarcely anything, except the servants' wages, so you see what I have brought my poor Marian down to. The only atonement I can make is to try and save her happiness by confessing my wrongdoing to you and begging that you will not visit it on her."

"'The only atonement I can make is to try and save her happiness by confessing my wrongdoing.'"

"I certainly will not do that," said Sir Anthony Pendered quickly. "As you say, her one fault has been a kindness of heart almost amounting to weakness, which, in my eyes, makes her more lovable than ever. As for the loss of her money, that matters nothing to me. I have more than I want, and——"

"You'll pay everything, without betraying me to Marian? Oh! I don't deserve it; but

do say you will do that, and I will relieve you of my presence near your *fiancée* as soon as possible, as a reward. I know that, after what I have told you, it would be an embarrassment to you to see me with Marian, because as you are *very* chivalrous, you could not let people know I was not her sister. I will disappear, and everyone can think I have been suddenly called out to my Australian lover to be married."

"Doesn't he exist?" questioned Sir Anthony, looking at her "engaged" finger and thinking of the matrimonial schemes she had just confessed.

"Not in Australia. But as I haven't been a success here, I may decide to be true to the person who gave me this ring." (She had bought it herself.) "Now that I've promised to go out of Marian's life for ever, you'll guard her happiness by seeing that everything is straightened here—financially?"

"I shall be only too delighted, if you will tell me how to manage it without my name appearing in the matter."

"We—ll, if you'd trust the money to me, I'd use it honestly to pay our debts, and give you all the receipts."

"So it shall be."

"You're a—a brick, Sir Anthony. The only difficulty left then is about poor little Minnie, of whom Marian is really very fond. People might gossip if Marian let her youngest sister go back to Australia with me; for as we are supposed to be so nearly related, surely it would be better to save a scandal and let—well, let sleeping sisters lie?"

"If Marian is really fond of Minnie, there will be plenty of room for the child at Torr Court, and she will be welcome to stay there, as far as I am concerned. I must say, Miss —er—Milton, that I think the child will be better off under our guardianship than in the care of her real sister."

"You *are* good, and I quite agree with you," responded Joan meekly, far from resenting his look of stern reproach. "When you've trusted me with that money to pay things, and I hand you the receipts, I'll hand you also a written undertaking never to trouble you or—Lady Pendered. You would like me to do that, wouldn't you?"

"I—er—perhaps something of the kind might be advisable," murmured Sir Anthony.

When he had gone, the girl chuckled and clapped her hands. Then she ran to a looking-glass. "You're not exactly stupid, my dear," she apostrophised her saintly reflection. "You've provided splendidly for Marian and you've saved her sensitive conscience. *Her* slate is clean. As for Minnie, she will be all right until the time comes, if it ever does, that you can do better for her. As for yourself—well, you can leave Marian a couple of hundred for pocket-money, and still get out of this with something on which to start again. You've finished with Mercy Milton, thank goodness! and—it *will* be a relief to do your hair another way."

Two days later, Joan Carthew had turned her back upon Toragel, and Mrs. Fitzpatrick's engagement to Sir Anthony Pendered was announced.

AFTER.

BUT yesterday I entertained a guest
Who came unbidden to my dwelling-place,
Yet for the very sweetness of his face
I made him welcome of my all and best.
And lo! my bread became a feast thrice blessed,
And my poor house was wondrous from his grace
Who made my hearth his own a little space
Ere yet to higher, fairer joys he pressed.
What though he lingered but a little while?
Enough to know he touched my hand with his,
Enough to think he tarried on his way;
And in this room, made holy by his smile,
Let me be glad, in these new silences,
To know that Love was with me yesterday.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.

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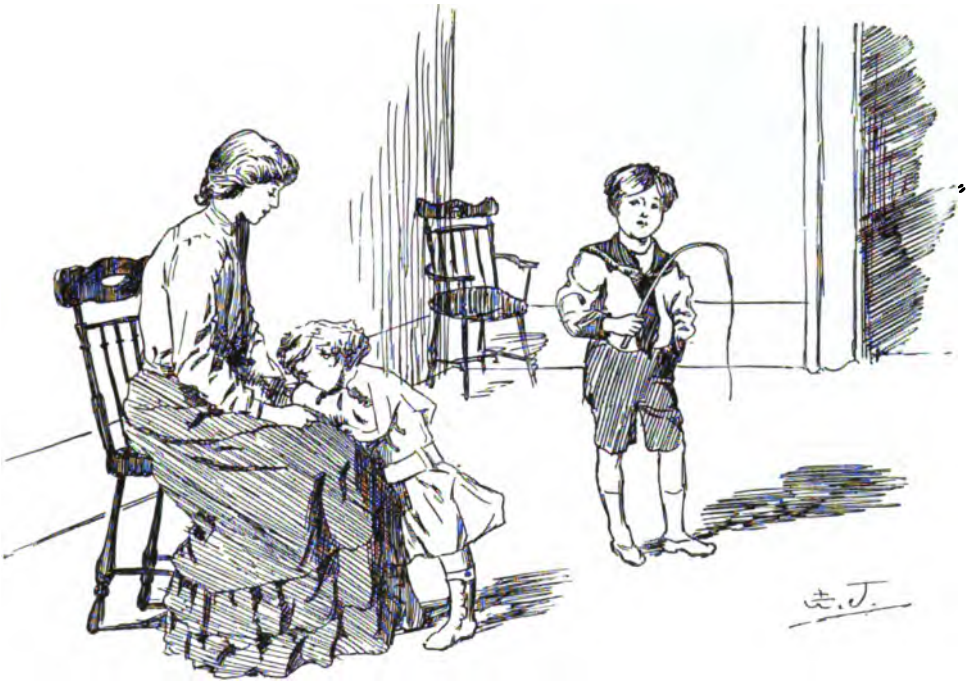

INCONSISTENT.

YOUNGER SON: Freddy won't let me be his horse any more!
FREDDY: No, of course not. Horses don't talk, and you *will* keep on saying: "Oo, it hurts!"

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

"ARE your new neighbours, the Wooseltons, interesting people?"

"Exceedingly so. He is the kind of man that won't speak to anybody without an introduction, and she is the kind of woman that borrows everything in your house without being introduced at all."

"WHAT! Billy won't do what his old grandfather tells him! What'll Billy do when he's grown up, and his little grandson won't do what he's told?"

"Why, treat him with kindness, till he's ashamed of himself!"

MAMMA: Johnny, did you wipe your feet on the mat when you came in?

JOHNNY: I couldn't get my shoe-strings untied; they were in a hard knot.

MAMMA: But what have the shoe-strings to do with it?

JOHNNY: I couldn't wipe my feet without taking off my shoes, could I?

SOFTLY: By Jove, old fellow! when a man's in love, he begins to think that his eyes are open for the first time.

SYMPATHISING FRIEND: Yes; and when it's all over, he sometimes has the same sensation.

"I HAD my character told the other day by a physiognomist. He said I was a vegetarian."

"How did he know that?"

"Well, he saw that I had carroty hair, reddish cheeks, a turn-up nose, and a sage look—see?"

WIGG: I always like to hear a man say what he thinks.

WAGG: But the people who always say what they think generally think such disagreeable things.

HICKS: That picture of d'Auber's that you bought at the Exhibition looks better in your study than it did there, somehow.

WICKS: Yes. I have hung it the other side up.

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OF COURSE!

WINIFRED (to whom Nurse has been reading the "Pilgrim's Progress"): Gran'pa, who is Apollyon? Nurse won't tell me, 'cos she says I'm not old enough to know.

GRANDPA: Well, dear, he's a person who comes after you when you're naughty.

WINIFRED: How silly Nurse is! Why, it's father, isn't it?

"WHAT is it your men are putting up in those tins?" inquired the visitor.

"Peaches," replied the purveyor.

"Your best brand?"

"Can't tell yet. We haven't put the labels on them."

FOND MOTHER: There now, thank goodness! I've sung the baby to sleep.

FOND FATHER: Poor little chap! When he's twenty-five, he won't dare go to sleep over a woman's singing!

HER FRIEND: And you don't find, my dear, that love is all sunshine and roses?

SHE (with remembrance of a lovers' quarrel): No! It's handkerchiefs, tears, and red noses!

"How did you dare, sir, to kiss my daughter last night on the dark piazza?"

"My dear sir, now that I've seen her by daylight, I wonder myself."

LITTLE PINCHER (fiercely): I've been looking for you! Is it true that you called me a puppy?

BIG BINGO (smiling): Not exactly; but I did say that you had not got over the distemper yet.

NO RESPITE!

STRANGER (who is spending Bank Holiday in the country): Hallo! Don't you take a day off on Bank Holidays here?

RUSTIC: No, zur; we be as busy as ever.

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THE HOSPITALITY THAT FAILED: A WINTER HOAX. BY LOUIS WAIN.

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MRS. BINKS: This music is wonderful. It makes you think of things that are divine.

MRS. WINKS: Yes, dear, it does. I was just thinking of a really perfect hat I saw in Bond Street this morning for four guineas.

"Do you think you save anything by employing that cooking-school graduate?"

"Yes, indeed! You can't imagine how very long everything that she cooks lasts."

MISTRESS: Don't forget, Bridget, that the Mugginses are coming to dinner to-night.

BRIDGET: Ah! don't let that bother ye, now—lave it to me. I'll just do me worst. They'll never trouble ye again.

HE (after his wife has read several pages): Is there any news in your mother's letter, dear?

SHE: I haven't come to the postscript yet.

JONES: So you are going to get an automobile?

BANKER: Yes, indeed. The doctor says I must walk more.

MRS. RIGHT: It isn't necessary to raise your hat to the housemaid.

MR. RIGHT: Well, I can wink at her if you prefer it.

UNCLE: Well, Tommy, did you catch any fish yesterday?

TOMMY: No! but we drowned all the worms.

SOME QUESTIONS CARRY THEIR OWN ANSWERS.

COCKNEY SPORTSMAN: What do you think you are waiting for? You don't suppose I'm going to be such an idiot as to get on your silly back again, *do* you?

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JOAN OF ARC AT THE HEAD OF THE FRENCH TROOPS RAISES THE SIEGE OF ORLEANS, BESIEGED BY THE ENGLISH INVADERS UNDER THE DUKE OF BEDFORD.

From the Picture by E. Lenepveu in the Paris Panthéon.

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THE FRENCH WESTMINSTER ABBEY

AND ITS FAMOUS PICTURES.

By ALDER ANDERSON.

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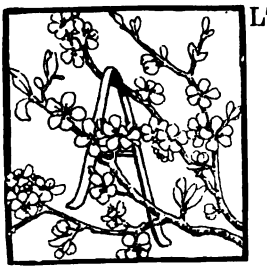

ALTHOUGH the Rue Soufflot is short, it is long enough to lead you from one world to another. At your back is the Boulevard St. Michel, with its noise and bustle; its *brasseries*, where, from morning till night, students and *soi-disant* students are to be seen ingurgitating rainbow-tinted liquids; its plate-glass-fronted shops; its interminable procession of jingling tramway-cars, and all the other evidence of "progress." Before you, calm and majestic, rises in silent rebuke the noble dome of the Panthéon.

The contrast is striking. There feverish unrest; here stately repose. The surrounding buildings have all a grave, old-world air, and, for the greater part of the day, the place is almost deserted. Yet around that dome controversy has ever waxed furious. Its history is practically the history of France for the last hundred and fifty years. Now a church, now a temple, according as the Clerical party or their opponents have obtained predominance in the State, it has symbolised, in the eyes of both, the grandeur or the decadence of the country. It was originally erected as the result of a vow made by His Most Christian Majesty Louis XV., King of France and of Navarre. Of several bad kings who had occupied the throne of St. Louis, this was probably the worst; but when, in 1745, he fell grievously sick, his illness was proclaimed and generally believed to be a public calamity. Day and night Paris was on its knees, fervently imploring Heaven to grant that the royal patient might recover. It was on this occasion that Louis received the cognomen of the "Well Beloved." Had he died then, at the comparatively early age of thirty-five, he would have left a much better reputation behind him than he eventually did. But his hour had not yet come; he was destined to do much more mischief in the world and finally to disgust France with the very name of royalty.

Neither to king nor to subject, however, is it given to read in the book of Fate, and the recovery of the crowned debauchee was consequently regarded as a special mark of divine favour. It was supposed to be attributable principally to the intercession of Ste. Geneviève, patron saint of Paris, always credited with taking a deep interest in the mundane affairs of French princes. To prove his gratitude to the saint, Louis the Well Beloved vowed that he would erect a magnificent temple in her honour. The task was entrusted to Soufflot, a renowned architect of the time, and in due course the basilica of Ste. Geneviève began slowly to rear its head. It was not completed when Louis received the peremptory summons that even kings must obey. Whether the saint intervened on this occasion or not is unknown; but, if she did, her mediation was ineffectual, for Louis was finally gathered to his fathers.

The King's death did not interfere with the building operations, and, in the following reign, the shrine containing the mortal remains of the saint, which the Church of Rome had always regarded as one of its most precious possessions, was duly installed with much pomp under the dome of the new basilica. It was a box of massive silver and gold, adorned with precious stones supposed to be of almost inestimable value, and dated from about the middle of the thirteenth century, when the original shrine, constructed at the time of the saint's death, 800 years earlier, had almost fallen to pieces from sheer old age.

In a very complete picture of Paris as it was just before the outbreak of the great Revolution, Sebastian Mercier, a shrewd and somewhat ironical observer of his contemporaries, refers at some length to Ste. Geneviève. "Heaven forbid," he exclaims, "that I should

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sneer at Ste. Geneviève, patron saint for ages past of the capital of France! Humble folk like to reflect that their garments have touched the saint's shrine, pray to her to cure them of their fevers, and then drink of a spring known to possess almost miraculous properties. Members of Parliament, sheriffs, and others of even more exalted rank, entreat Ste. Geneviève to put an end to droughts or to restore sick princes to health. When the patient is at the last extremity, the shrine is uncovered gradually, as if to allow its healing virtues to escape in proportion to the danger; if the need be pressing, the shrine is completely uncovered. Heaven forbid, I say again, that I should sneer at all these honest folk! Many bitter tears have I seen shed, many sobs heard, and groans so deep that I have felt the very depths of my heart stirred. At such moments I have experienced a feeling of sincere respect for a form of religion so well adapted to the very limited intelligence of the vulgar."

THE VISION OF JOAN OF ARC ASSURING HER THAT SHE HAS BEEN SELECTED TO DRIVE THE ENGLISH INVADERS FROM FRANCE.

FROM THE PICTURE BY E. LENEPVEU.

t the evolution of ideas was proceeding apace, and even "the vulgar" were soon to be animated by the all-pervading spirit of revolt against the pretensions of such deference to legend.

In April, 1791, the great orator Mirabeau died suddenly. His cadenced eloquence had charmed and electrified the National Assembly, of which he was so prominent a member. The memory of so unprecedented an orator ought, it was felt, to be honoured in an unprecedented manner. It was an epoch when Anglomania had attained its acme in France. To say that any custom was English was equivalent to saying that it was superlatively excellent. England was accustomed to honour her great dead by according them sepulture in Westminster Abbey. Why should not France also have a Westminster Abbey? No sooner was the question formulated than it was decided that England's example must be followed. The new basilica of Ste. Geneviève seemed to have been constructed for the very purpose. By a stroke of the pen the religious

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JOAN OF ARC TAKES PART IN THE CORONATION CEREMONY OF CHARLES VII. IN THE CATHEDRAL AT RHEIMS.

FROM THE PICTURE BY E. LENEPVEU.

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character of the edifice was abolished; another stroke and the Basilica of Ste. Geneviève became the Panthéon; still another, and the religious emblems over the portal had given place to the words: "*Aux grands hommes, la patrie reconnaissante*" — the homage of a grateful country to great men.

Mirabeau was to be the first occupant of the new temple. His funeral procession, over three miles in length, was made the occasion for a most imposing military and civil display. Lafayette, then at the height of his renown, with his American-won laurels still thick upon him, caracoled at the head of the troops.

Two years later, the monster Marat, the "Friend of the People," was stabbed to death in his bath by Charlotte Corday. The National Convention decreed that he, too, was entitled to Pantheistic honours. David, the painter, pronounced a most grandiloquent panegyric on his deceased friend. "Marat," he exclaimed, in the bombastic style of the period, "thy ashes cry aloud for very joy from the depths of the tomb! No longer dost thou regret thy mortal shell, when thou seest the people bearing it to the Panthéon in order to crown thy labours with glory!"

STE. GENEVIÈVE, THE PATRON SAINT OF PARIS, KEEPING WATCH OVER THE CITY.

FROM THE PICTURE BY PUVIS DE CHAVANNES.

By this time, however, it had been discovered that Mirabeau's attachment to Revolutionary principles was merely feigned. The posthumous honours conferred upon him were, therefore, unmerited. The Convention accordingly decided that his body should be removed from the Temple of Fame, and the body of Marat put in its place. This was at the end of 1793.

The newcomer was destined to have even a briefer spell of glory than his predecessor. On the 1st of February, 1795, a popular movement which had been growing against

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THE MARTYRDOM OF JOAN OF ARC, BURNED AT THE STAKE AT ROUEN IN 1431, AT THE AGE OF 29, WITH THE CONNIVANCE OF THE FRENCH AND ENGLISH CLERGY.

From a Painting by E. Lenepveu.

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his memory reached its climax. By a preconcerted plan, busts of Charlotte Corday's victim, which had been erected in several theatres and places of public resort, were on that day simultaneously overthrown. The popular fury was only assuaged when the body of the "Friend of the People" had been dragged with ignominy from its resting-place and thrown literally to the dogs.

ST. LOUIS IN EGYPT DURING THE CRUSADES.
FROM THE PICTURE BY CABANEL.

Two master minds, Voltaire and Rousseau, had presided over the intellectual evolution of the century. The mortal remains of both were secured, though not without considerable difficulty, and interred in the vaults of the Panthéon with avowedly Pagan rites. There they have remained, and there they are still to-day. In 1806, Napoleon, now master of the destinies of France, enlisted the sympathies of the Church by restoring the Panthéon to its keeping. It was as masterly a stroke of policy as any he ever effected. The civil and religious characters of the edifice were combined, as is more or less the case in Westminster Abbey, and a number of great dignitaries of the Empire, among them several Protestants even, were interred in the vaults.

Louis XVIII., Napoleon's successor, had different views, and decided to bestow an exclusively religious and Roman Catholic character on the basilica, and to re-dedicate it to Ste. Geneviève, and

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THE FUNERAL OF PRESIDENT CARNOT AT THE PANTHÉON

FROM THE PICTURE BY M. GEORGES BERTRAND.

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LOUIS IX., KNOWN AS SAINT LOUIS, WHEN A CHILD, INSTRUCTED BY HIS MOTHER, BLANCHE OF CASTILLE.

FROM THE PICTURE BY CABANEL.

to Ste. Geneviève alone. One important factor, unfortunately, was lacking to do this with success. There was no longer any shrine!

Most of the measures taken by the Revolution had been of a very drastic nature. It had by no means been considered sufficient merely to secularise the basilica. The head and front of the offending, the celebrated shrine, had been too closely associated with the past *régime* not to be obnoxious to the reformers. It was too tangible and visible an evidence of the tyrannical sway exercised by the Church, in collusion with the Monarchy, to hope for mercy. During over one thousand years, on all occasions of great national peril, the shrine had been carried with imposing ceremony through the streets of Paris, and the populace had been trained to regard its passage with the most abject veneration. The organisation of these processions was an affair of State requiring the co-operation of the Throne and the Parliament as well as the Church. One of the greatest honours a burgess of Paris could aspire to was to be admitted as a member of the Corporation, from whose ranks the bearers of the shrine were selected. Great epidemics, too much or too little rain, a foreign invasion, or the sickness of the reigning monarch, were all among the occasions on which an appeal to the saint might with propriety be resorted to. Should the desired result follow within

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a reasonable time of the procession, it was attributed to the direct influence of Ste. Geneviève, whose prestige increased accordingly. If Fate remained obdurate,

"THE DEATH OF STE. GENEVIÈVE." THE RIGHT-HAND PANEL OF TRIPTYCH BY JEAN PAUL LAURENS.

some plausible explanation was readily found, and accepted by all but the railers.

Remembering all these facts, it was considered imperative by the Revolutionists that the shrine should be got rid of, and got rid of it was accordingly, and that in the most effectual manner. Every vestige of it disappeared in the melting-pots of the National Mint. From the report drawn up on the occasion, and signed by a number of trustworthy witnesses, it appears that the shrine was by no means so valuable as it had been alleged to be. The *soi-disant* jewels of inestimable value were merely bits of coloured glass. A careful inventory was made of the contents of the shrine, which included a certain number of human bones. These were burned by the public executioner on the same spot where the King was to pay with his life for the faults of his predecessors. Everybody was convinced that the last had been heard of Ste. Geneviève's shrine. But it was much too valuable an asset of the Church to be suffered to disappear in this way. Like the phœnix, it was to rise again from its ashes.

Careful search was made among the relics in the possession of the different religious communities scattered through the country, and – most opportunely—two or three minute pieces of bone were discovered which, it was declared, had once formed part of Ste. Geneviève's skeleton. A new shrine was forthwith constructed, in which these were enclosed, and this was placed under the dome, on the spot where the former shrine had stood.

But the vicissitudes of the basilica were not yet nearly at an end. Before very long France sent the Bourbons once more packing, and put Louis Phillippe, the head of the other branch of the family, on the throne in

"THE DEATH OF STE. GENEVIÈVE." LEFT-HAND PANEL OF TRIPTYCH BY JEAN PAUL LAURENS.

their place. One of the new monarch's first acts was to give satisfaction to public opinion by reinaugurating the Panthéon and banishing the shrine to the cathedral of Notre Dame.

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There it remained for about twenty years—until, in fact, three years after the time when Louis Phillippe in turn received notice to quit. Napoleon III., the next ruler after the brief interregnum, was no sooner in power than he hastened to reverse Louis Phillippe's action, and re-christened the Panthéon the Church of Ste. Geneviève. The religious pomp displayed on this occasion was of the most imposing character. In his pastoral address, the Archbishop of Paris attributed all the misfortunes of France to the infamous treatment accorded by the capital to her patron saint. The new ruler was assured that the fall of Louis Phillippe was to be directly traced to his conduct in this respect, and to no other cause.

Alas for the cogency of this archiepiscopal reasoning! Two more decades had not elapsed before Napoleon III. was himself dethroned and an exile. If the good archbishop could argue that Louis Phillippe lost a kingdom by reason of his want of faith, the anti-Clericals with equal propriety could maintain that his successor lost an empire by an excess of the same quality.

Once more, after the consolidation of the power of the present Republic, the edifice was secularised and the name of the Panthéon re-bestowed upon it. The first great man to be accorded sepulture in its vaults was Victor Hugo, whose funeral, in 1884, will long be remembered as one of the most impressive solemnities of modern times. President Carnot was also buried in the Panthéon.

As for the shrine of Ste. Geneviève, it was removed to the ancient church of St. Étienne du Mont, in the imme liate vicinity. There it has remained ever since, and there precisely similar reflections to those committed to writing by

"TWELFTH-CENTURY SUPPLIANTS AT THE SHRINE OF STE. GENEVIÈVE ENTREATING THE SAINT TO INTERCEDE WITH HEAVEN FOR THE ABATING OF A DISEASE VERY PREVALENT AT THE TIME."

FROM THE PICTURE BY T. H. MAILLOT.

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ATTILA, KING OF THE HUNS, ADVANCING AGAINST PARIS.
FROM THE PICTURE BY DELAUNAY AND COURSELLES-DUMONT.

Sebastian Mercier, about a hundred years ago, may to-day have occurred to more than one critical and observant visitor. What other changes may be in store for the shrine, Time alone can say, but the Church will no doubt never be satisfied so long as the shrine does not occupy what it considers to be its rightful place, under the dome of the Panthéon, once more rechristened the Church of Ste. Geneviève.

Everything possible has been done by the present *régime* to enhance the prestige of the Panthéon and render it a worthy monument to the *élite* of the nation's genius. The splendid paintings that adorn the walls are all signed by the greatest names in modern French art. No attempt has been made to cripple the genius of the artists by insisting on a too rigid interpretation of the secular spirit that would exclude every incident however remotely connected with the original destination of the edifice. Thus it is that incidents in the legendary lives of several saints, including that of Ste. Geneviève, the shepherdess of Nanterre, herself, have been depicted, as well as the more modern and better authenticated facts of Joan of Arc's story. Civic virtue and magnanimity of soul are not the exclusive appanage of any age, sect, or nation, and even the fables of mythology are frequently cited "to point a moral or adorn a tale."

The range of subjects covered by this great series of decorative paintings is thus a peculiarly wide one, as may be seen from our present set of reproductions. Illustrating the legendary history of Ste. Geneviève herself are pictures by Puvis de Chavannes, T. H. Maillot, and Jean Paul Laurens. The last-named artist, whose work was the subject of a special article in last month's WINDSOR, is represented by a mag-

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nificent triptych, of which the two side-panels only are here given, the centre painting, which shows the dying saint propped up on pillows, with arms extended to bless the kneeling multitude that watches around her couch, having been reproduced in the previous article. Another picture by Laurens depicts an intercession for the working of miracles that were specially associated with the sepulchre of this saint.

Joan of Arc, who has now been canonised, is the protagonist of several of the most dramatic of these Panthéon paintings, and it is interesting to compare Lenepveu's presentment of the Maid of Orleans with the pictures —inspired by the same subject—by Laurens, already reproduced in the WINDSOR. The history of the heroine is here illustrated from the date of her vision that called her to her country's aid while she was still merely tending her sheep, down to her tragic end at the stake, at the joint decree of both French and English authorities, military and ecclesiastical.

"THE INTERCESSION FOR MIRACLES AT THE SEPULCHRE OF STE. GENEVIÈVE."
FROM THE PICTURE BY JEAN PAUL LAURENS.

"THE SHRINE OF STE. GENEVIÈVE CARRIED IN SOLEMN PROCESSION THROUGH THE STREETS OF PARIS, IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY, IN SUPPLICATION FOR DRY WEATHER."
FROM THE PICTURE BY MAILLOT.

A striking instance of the possibilities of collaboration in painting is provided by the picture of Attila, King of the Huns, advancing against Paris at the head of his barbarous hordes. This is the work of two artists, MM. Delaunay and Courselles-Dumont.

Latterly the secular character of the Panthéon has been still further accentuated by the installation, under the dome, of Foucault's pendulum, the movements of which demonstrate the revolution of the

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THE PAGAN CLOVIS, FOUNDER OF THE FRENCH MONARCHY, AT THE BATTLE OF JOLBIAC, INVOKING THE GOD OF HIS CHRISTIAN WIFE, CLOTHILDE, TO AID HIM AGAINST THE GERMAN HORDES.

FROM THE PICTURE BY JOSEPH BLANC.

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globe. The great battle-piece, with which Detaille, the painter of the world-famous "Le Rêve," is, even as I write, filling up the only vacant space on the walls, gives to the edifice, in conjunction with the great painting of the funeral of President Carnot, here reproduced, the exact touch of modernity that was required to balance the archaic character of the rest of the decorations, and thus to link it with the living forces of the nation.

THE BAPTISM OF CLOVIS AFTER HIS CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY
FROM THE PICTURE BY JOSEPH BLANC.

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The Heart of Lord Mandeville

By Agnes and Egerton Castle

"LA! your lordship!" cried Miss Peggy Pommeroy, turning her celebrated blue eyes roguishly upon Lord Mandeville.

They sat together upon the striped sofa in the green-room of the Little Theatre, Haymarket; she, for his entertainment, passing comments on each actor and actress who lingered (in the vicinity of the mirror) awaiting the call, or hurried through to the curtain. His lordship listened, all insolent languor. At rare intervals a little snort would escape him—his nearest approach to laughter. And if he were moved to such expressions of amusement, it was not so much with Miss Pommeroy as at her. Yet it was all glory for Peggy to have him beside her—the most notorious *roué* upon the town, and the most fastidious. There were ladies—and great ladies, too, as she was aware—who would lightly have given all their admirers for Lord Mandeville's indolent notice. What mattered it that she well knew, in her heart, how empty was this conquest; well knew that not a smile or a frown in her whole repertory had really the power to charm him; that he but lolled at her side because, having drifted into the green-room, this weeping autumn night, he was simply too lazy to move again, and pulled her curls with no more emotion than he played with the seals at his fob? The others knew naught of all this, and it was enough for Peg. Oh, how her great eyes shone and ogled! How arch was she, and how coy! How her ripe lips smiled, and how loud (as each new-comer entered the room) they rebuked some unexistent ardour!

Of all passions, vanity is perhaps that which, gratified, affords the most complete and lasting satisfaction. Peg's bosom swelled with triumph as she noted the impression produced upon her colleagues—how the Noble Father frowned and strutted with fresh zest as he passed; how her dear rival, feigning to examine the position of a patch, sought to catch his lordship's eye in the mirror, and failed.

"La! your lordship!" cried Peggy, very loud and shrill, "I vow I must not listen when you say such things!"

Lord Mandeville opened his heavy lids a little wider for an instant and almost hesitated on speech. It would have been hard indeed for Miss Pommeroy to have listened, for he had not uttered anything more audible than a grunt these five minutes. But Miss de Vyne (the dear rival) could not be aware of this; and the glance of furious envy that she darted at her friend as she now flounced out of the room filled that young lady with ecstasy. She had, moreover, succeeded beyond her intention. For, just before Miss de Vyne's exit, Mr. Montagu Mortemar had made his entrance, and, for the first time in his life, he seemed to become really aware of Peggy Pommeroy's existence.

Now, of all men on earth, the First Comedy Lady most admired the Tragic Leading Gentleman. Before the native grandeur of his pale brow all the coronets in the world were lustreless in her sight; but to show him with what high-placed friends she could on occasions consort—that was truly a moment worth living for!

Mr. Mortemar's part was done for the night: he had just been conclusively stabbed, had gulped forth his last blessing and his last curse, and his corpse had duly been carried away by lamenting retainers. He was stalking down the length of the room, at his best tragedy manner, when the arch cry struck his ear. He started, turned; elevated one eyebrow to anguish, depressed

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the other to menace. His hand was on his hip. (If anyone could have thought him more noble than he thought himself, it was Peggy Pommeroy.) Perceiving, however, the identity of Miss Pommeroy's admirer, a change came over him. With a sleeking of his whole attitude, he bowed profoundly and approached.

"We are honoured to see your lordship among us! I trust, my lord, you will permit me to recall myself to your lordship's recollection—I had the honour of meeting your lordship at the 'Three Tuns.'"

"Had you?" said his lordship. He tilted his head further back on the sofa-cushions to gaze at Mr. Mortemar, and wished vaguely that "the mummer would stop smiling."

The tragedian's fingers trembled round his snuff-box. His lordship's affability was great: did it justify the happy recipient in offering a pinch?

"Your lordship has seen my 'Altamont' to-night? Connoisseurs are kind enough to tell me that they prefer it to Davy's. But poor little Davy——!" He paused: Lord Mandeville was yawning outrageously.

"Oh—Davy——!" echoed Miss Pommeroy with great contempt, running a fervid glance over Altamont's fine proportions.

The room had begun to fill about them—the Tragedy was over, the Farce would begin anon. The First Villain—in private life an irrepressibly jovial soul—clapped his late victim brutally on the back, crying:

"What cheer, my buck! Curse me if ever we did the business finer than to-night!"

A wan smile curled Mr. Mortemar's lips. "We——!"

Mrs. Macnamara, this evening "Zenobia, wife of the Mountain Chief," in brocade and powder, progressed towards the centre of the room, surrounded by "mountain maidens" in tiffany and straw hats. She was thinking ardently of supper; but at sight of Peggy and her lounging lord, she halted with marked disapproval.

And still the company grew larger, between the two plays. Many accepted patrons strolled in from the side-boxes—Mr. Stafford, fine, bright and clean-cutting as his own ready sword, doomed (as was already known behind the scenes) to approaching matrimony, but taking the life of London Town with renewed gallantry for his last fling. After him, Captain Spicer, that noted guide of youth. No one could tolerate the creature, yet he knew everyone, he went everywhere. The name of his whilom regiment was a mystery; but there was little mystery about his present occupation. He had a military eye, albeit affected by *strabismus*, for a country recruit, a celebrated gift for drilling the bumpkin in the manœuvres of the world; and if, at the end of a campaign, the gallant instructor's pockets were heavy and his recruit's correspondingly light, why, it showed that the latter's education was complete.

To-night, Captain Spicer's oblique vision shone with unusual triumph, and there was a glow on his bloodless cheek: he had in tow a stout young gentleman from the city of Norwich, whose late father had been reputed as of fabulous wealth. They had each under their belts perhaps more burgundy than could be carried with grace.

"Ah, my lord!" cried Stafford, "the evening to you!" His eye was roving round the room as he spoke. "I vow, Miss Pommeroy, your blue eyes are more prodigious large than ever!"

"They need be," retorted the girl with her impudent ogle, "to take in so many fine bucks together." Her rolling orbs lingered on Mortemar—but he was adamant. Then she shot a sidelong leer towards his lordship, to see if he were any way stirred. But still his lordship sat yawning, the image of weariness.

"Will Mr. Stafford have a pinch?" quoth Mortemar, with his best leg and his superlative flourish. He was desperately proud of his snuff-box (which, he was fond of hinting, was a tender momento from an enamoured lady of quality). With the tail of his eye on Mandeville, he began to work up to the anecdote: "Do I see you notice this little trinket? . . . A curious history, sir——"

"Gad, Mr. Mortemar! is that you? No snuff, I thank you, sir. 'Tis a fad of mine, but, to my thinking, there's but one fashion of enjoying rapee."

"And what is that?" eagerly asked the young gentleman from Norwich. Stafford wheeled and measured the recruit with a haughty eye.

"From a little white wrist, my good fellow," he answered at length; "or, better still, if fortune offers, from a dimpled shoulder. He who has thus tasted his pinch——" he broke off.

"Put a pinch on my wrist," Miss Pommeroy was crying with a giggle; and, her eyes on Stafford, thrust forth that plump member.

"Do, Mr. Mortemar," said Stafford, "and Captain Spicer's new friend can practise. But recommend him to shut his mouth."

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"How arch was she, and how coy!"

Then he turned airily to Mrs. Macnamara.

"My dear madam," said he, "I vow I have been thrilled! Zenobia . . . Zenobia is a magnificent performance. Zenobia, with her bevy of maidens——" He swept a smiling glance along the self-conscious row: black eyes, grey eyes, sly eyes, innocent eyes, gave him back his handsome look with interest. And yet his gaze wandered like that of one seeking. "'Twas a sight to make an old man young, and——"

"And a young gentleman——?" put in Mrs. Macnamara, with a jolly, fat laugh. On the boards she outdid Mrs. Siddons; but behind the scenes she was plain Bridget Macnamara, with a good-natured heart, an easy morality, and a zest for meals.

"A young gentleman, if you mean me, ma'am," said Tom Stafford, "wished he had twenty hearts . . . and as many purses."

"Oh, fie, sir! who talks of purses?"

"Merely as a means of expressing the feeling of a true heart, ma'am," said Stafford, with his most engaging smile. "But, by the way, do I not miss one of the bewitching mountain maidens?"

"Oh, Mr. Stafford, sir!" she menaced with her massive finger.

"The creature with the voice, Mrs. Macnamara."

"The creature with the voice? Why, he means my new pupil, girls!" said Mrs. Macnamara, delighted. The days were long gone by when the light in a young man's

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eye could hold any personal meaning for her; but she had not lost her sympathy with love.

A shrug and a look of scorn now passed among the listening damsels, as you may see the wind ruffle the cornfields: this butterfly gentleman in silver brocade had but a poor taste, after all! But Mrs. Macnamara had caught Miss de Vyne by the arm and whispered in her ear:

"The child has never had one bit of fun since she came to us. Go tell her that I want her. Mind, my dear, *I* want her. Bid her here instantly." She nodded and smiled as the messenger whisked away.

"You'd never believe it, sir, that girl (oh! you've got an eye, Mr. Stafford, you've noticed her!)—now mark my words, that girl will be the greatest actress on the stage one of these fine days, or my name is not Bridget Macnamara."

"Why, the thing's a Quaker!" cried the pertest of maidens, interrupting her conversation with the young gentleman from Norwich, to throw the denunciation over her shoulder.

"A Quaker!" echoed Stafford, and was more interested than ever.

"Who's a Quaker?" hiccoughed the young gentleman from Norwich. "Quakers . . . ecod! we grow 'em fine at Norwich!"

"Do Quakers ever kiss?" inquired Lord Mandeville, raising his lazy voice.

"Yes—on the sly," said Peggy tartly.

"Neither in public nor on the sly, Miss Pommeroy," put in the matron with some severity (Peggy was not of her favourites), "has my pupil ever known any such familiarities—poor child!" concluded the lady, half to herself, with a sudden relapse from dignity.

"Pasitively, quite a phenamenan!" lisped Captain Spicer.

"I declare," cried a gentleman in plum-colour, "a shocking state of affairs! Where is the young lady, that this omission may instantly be rectified?" And he laughed in delight at his own wit.

"It would take a better man than you, Sir Thomas, I'm thinking," laughed Mrs. Macnamara.

"'Ow!' he cried, and this was all he had breath to cry."

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"By gum! is it a wager?" cried Captain Spicer's recruit. This youth was beginning to have vague glimmers of a fast gentleman's duties in Town. "Ecod! if it's for kissing a Quaker, I'm on for it. . . . We know how to deal with 'em, at Norwich!" He winked offensively; then, of a sudden, kissed the nearest maiden with a smack, and was instantly paid back by a swinging box on the ear.

"Mr. Staffard, sir," cried Captain Spicer, "are you for a wager?" (When was Tom Stafford not for a wager, even with so uncongenial a taker as Captain Spicer? He would almost as soon have refused a duel!) "And you, my lard?"

"If anyone is wagering, I'll wager," said his lordship. "Perhaps someone will kindly tell me what it is about."

"'Tis who shall kiss the Quaker," said Captain Spicer waggishly.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" clucked Mrs. Macnamara in some fluster.

"Nay," said Mr. Stafford; "the bet, as I take it, is won by him whom the lady herself shall choose for favour."

"Why, certainly," said Spicer, with one severe orb on his pupil. "I trust we're all gentlemen here. Shall each stake ten guineas?"

"I'll have no tricks played with my young ladies," said "Zenobia."

"Tricks!" exclaimed Stafford. "My dearest madam, it shall be a fair field and no favour—the gentle Beauty shall choose as freely as young Paris himself . . . amongst us divinities, ha!" His ironical eye swept from the insignificance of Sir Thomas to Lord Mandeville's pallid, indolent mask; from Spicer's green visage to the red vacuity of the young gentleman from Norwich. And he had an agreeable consciousness of the charming figure cut by one Tom Stafford among these assorted rivals. "If kissing goes by favour——" thought he, and smiled.

"Well, well," said the placable matron; "indeed, I'm never one to spoil sport, and a kiss never hurt anybody, to my thinking. But hush, hush!" she warned, finger on lip.

A tall, slender girl came quickly in, her draperies fluttering. She had evidently been interrupted in her disrobing, for her soft, brown hair had been almost brushed clear of powder and was coiled in a careless knot at the back of her head. The paint had been washed from her cheek. A very windflower she looked, white and fragile, and yet with a certain woodland strength of her own, amid these high-coloured stage roses. She seemed very tall, in the long lines of her plain stuff dress; and her throat merged like a flower-stem from the violet folds of the mantle she had thrown across her shoulders.

Lord Mandeville prodded Miss Pommeroy and then pointed with his large white forefinger.

"Who is that?" he said suddenly.

"That!" echoed Miss Peggy, with huge scorn. "That!" she cried with her coarse giggle. "Why, that's the Quaker your lordship has wagered to kiss!"

The new-comer looked neither to the right nor to the left—she went straight to Mrs. Macnamara.

"You sent for me, madam," said she.

Mr. Stafford had been right; hers was a voice indeed! Low-pitched and tender-noted, it seemed to murmur to the heart, and yet reached in distinctness to the further recesses of the room. Such a voice alone, in an actress, is genius.

"By gum!" suddenly shouted the young gentleman from Norwich. He was never overcome by shyness, and now, with a stiff lining of burgundy, felt himself a match for any fine fellow of the company. He elbowed his way between a beau in puce and the indignant Miss de Vyne. "By gum!" he cried, and slapped his thigh, "if it's not Rachel Peace!"

"Rachel Peace," said Lord Mandeville to himself, as if the sound liked him.

"Captain Spicer," cried Stafford, with sharpness, "keep your cub in order, I pray you!"

The blood had rushed in a lovely tide to the brow of Rachel Peace; but she kept her eyes steadily on Mrs. Macnamara's face and stood wrapped in a gentle dignity more closely still than in the folds of her violet cloak.

There was something of a scuffle between Captain Spicer and his young friend, which resulted in the latter's momentary silence. But his mouth was already open for the passage of his next explosive contribution to the dialogue, when:

"Rachel, my dear," said the good-natured Mrs. Bridget, "I'll not have you hiding away in this fashion when there's laughter and compliments and all the things young people like waiting for you. Here is a friend of mine wants to be introduced——"

"If anything could make me prouder," interrupted Stafford in his pleasant, high-bred tones, "than the title of friend, which Mrs. Macnamara so obligingly bestows upon

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me, it would be, madam"—he bowed deep before the girl—"to have the honour of knowing one whose voice, too seldom lifted to-night, has moved this heart in such unwonted fashion."

He laid his hand upon his fine brocaded waistcoat. The girl's glance deepened and kindled as she listened to him. Her sensitive face quivered. She looked from him to her protectress, and seemed to hesitate between a guileless pleasure and a timid distrust. Lord Mandeville suddenly rose from his seat beside the now sulky Peg, and stood gazing at Miss Peace as upon some thing unknown, undreamed of, his heavy-lidded eyes wide open at last.

"Hark to him!" Mrs. Macnamara laughed, pointing at Stafford. "He'd talk the birds off the trees!"

"Ah!" cried that gentleman, "if I could but talk this lady and yourself to my poor table to-night——!"

"Table!" quoth she, a glitter in her eye.

"A trifle of supper, with my unworthy self as host?"

"Well," responded Mrs. Bridget comfortably, "I'm not the one to say 'Nay.' Supper is always a good thing. We'll come, eh, Rachel?"

All the light had fled from the girl's face. She shrank back. "Indeed, sir. . . . I beg you, madam, let me retire. I cannot sup with this gentleman."

"Hoity-toity!" cried Madam, as the vision of capon and Sillery faded from her mental gaze. "'Tis a vast pity, my dear, that you will still wear these airs! Oh, forget that you were once a Friend, Rachel Peace, and for Heaven's sake be friendly!"

Once more the girl shifted her eyes from Mrs. Macnamara to Mr. Stafford, and then back again. Something, perhaps, in the suppressed eagerness of the gentleman's watchful look; something, it might be, of self-betrayal in the dame's greedy lips and her meaning glances seemed to strike her with horror. She stepped back as if a precipice opened at her feet.

"Indeed," she said quickly, "I must go home."

Her eyes were like a frightened child's. Lord Mandeville caught sight of them, and suddenly there was a throbbing within his breast. Now, this was strange, for it was as well known to himself as to everyone else that he possessed no heart.

Rachel turned, wrapping her mantle about her. Blindly she was seeking an escape, when, at a whisper from Captain Spicer, the young gentleman from Norwich sprang forward playfully to bar her way.

"Dost thee not remember me, friend?" cried he, and thrust his grinning face close to hers.

She looked from him in disgust, and her eye then fell on Sir Thomas, who, at the other side of her, had advanced with skip and jump and a series of inane bows. He had but a vapid mind, this little baronet, a poor taste in garments and a feeble command of attitude; nevertheless, he had been born a gentleman—with another bow, he fell away forthwith.

But an undaunted spark was he of Norwich.

"Ecod!" he pursued in light and elegant tones of banter, "is there so much hurry, my dear? By gum! but old Master Peace made a fine to do after you at Norwich! What will thee give me," he cried, charmed with his humour, "not to betray the secret?"

Rachel's face was white; but with a sudden gathering of strength and dignity, she turned upon him in grave composure.

"I am sorry," she said—and her wonderful voice vibrated through the room—"but I have no speech to hold with thee, friend. There is no secret for thee to keep, and therefore naught thou canst do for me. Nor is there aught I can offer thee."

Her answer in that same Quaker phraseology with which she had been thus insolently baited, her delicate, serious air, held strange rebuke for one who could feel it. Mr. Stafford lifted the single eyeglass that hung from a ribbon round his neck, to look at her with ever-deepening interest. Lord Mandeville came a pace nearer. The young gentleman from Norwich thought the little silence that had fallen on the room could betoken nothing but a flattering attention centred on his next move. He caught Rachel by the elbow.

"What," he cried, "naught? Naught for *me?* Shall I not have the Kiss of Peace?" He paused to look round for admiration.

"Captain Spicer," exclaimed Mr. Stafford, with an air of nausea, "that animal of yours is not fit to be let loose!"

Rachel stood like a statue. Peg Pommeroy had clapped her hands with a loud laugh, echoed by some of the other girls from the different corners whither, with their admirers, they had retreated. Stimulated by the sound of this applause, Captain Spicer's pupil

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"Paused to curtsy before Mrs. Macnamara and then passed on."

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lurched forward towards the Quaker's disdainful face.

"Unhand her, sir!" deeply ordered Mrs. Macnamara.

Lord Mandeville had taken two long steps. Without a word he extended his arm. His great white hand closed upon the nape of the youth's neck; it was a fine grip. The youth's wig yawned over his cropped head. "Ow!" he cried, and this was all he had breath to cry; he was swung violently backwards, shaken like a rat in the jaws of a terrier, and then released with a twist that sent him plunging into Captain Spicer's lean waistcoat.

The gentlemen of the Little Theatre were prodigiously impressed by my lord's neatness of action. The ladies screeched or tittered, according to their disposition. Lord Mandeville and Rachel Peace looked upon each other's face and minded no other in the room.

"Madam," he said, bowing before her with a profounder respect than he had ever shown a duchess, "you wish to retire: my coach is at the door——" Her grave and searching eye darkened with a deep reproach. "Madam," he went on earnestly, as he read her thought, "I shall be honoured if you condescend to make use of it, of my horses and servants. I purpose to return on foot."

Mr. Stafford stood watching with that smile of his that was at once so genial and so cynical. He saw her, after this single hesitation, lay her slender hand in acquiescence upon Lord Mandeville's wrist. "Heaven help the girl!" thought he. "She's fled from the arms of the bear cub into the lion's jaw. Gad! I've never seen Mandeville so taken. 'Tis a pale child, when all's said and done . . . but, stab me, how she moves!" His experienced eye kindled as he marked the inimitable grace with which this unknown actress paused to curtsy before Mrs. Macnamara and then passed on, still led by Lord Mandeville, towards the door.

Here, however, they were arrested by a roar—the young gentleman from Norwich had recovered from his sudden giddiness and found his breath once more.

"Ecod!" he was crying, "I will have blood for this!"

His stout, red face looked so exceeding comic without the shade of his wig that Stafford was seized with laughter. But Captain Spicer, whose usually astute intellect had been to-night somewhat troubled by the fumes of the bottle, now grasped the situation with a return of sobered wits. A quarrel with Lord Mandeville! His fool of a recruit could come but poorly out of any such pass, and the gallant Captain's deeply interested exchequer could allow of no such risk.

"Blad?" he echoed shrilly. "No, sir, no blad here, but marrowbones!" He caught the youth sharply by the shoulder. "Are you mad?" he hissed in his ear. "Don't you know who 'tis you're talking to? 'Tis the famous Lord Mandeville, you booby! You must apalagise."

"Apologise!" cried the unhappy young gentleman. "I? Apologise——?"

"He's had too much wine, my lard. Why, what a sight the fallow is! Where's your wig, sir? You are making a laughing-stack of yourself—and of me!"

Here the irate Captain plucked the wig from one of the actors, who was convulsing Miss Peggy by some merry antic with the same. He clapped it fiercely on his pupil's poll, with so much disregard to symmetry, however, that the queue came to the front and effectively choked further protest.

Rachel's lips broke into a delicious smile. Mandeville, who could not move his eyes from her face, even for one contemptuous glance towards his victim—although he had halted to hear what this latter might have to say in the way of further challenge—proceeded again unmoved towards the door. He had once more ceremoniously taken the Quaker's hand. As the panels closed upon them, Stafford fell likewise into sudden gravity upon the memory of Rachel's smile. "By Heaven," he said to himself, "Mandeville is a connoisseur — the creature is exquisite!"

"So, gentlemen," said he aloud, cheerfully, as he turned once more to the company, "we have lost the wager."

"You, at least, made but a poor race for it, Mr. Stafford," said hungry Mrs. Macnamara in dudgeon. Then: "And you, girls," she cried with asperity, "shame on you to be loitering like this! Some of you will be called in a minute. Miss Pommeroy, you're for the curtain, if you please."

Captain Spicer and his recruit from Norwich were wrangling in a corner. And presently the young gentleman was observed to shed tears: Spicer had actually threatened to abandon him!

"What would become of you if I did not keep my eyes on you?" rated the Captain.

"Captain Spicer's eyes are more useful than most people's," said Stafford soothingly;

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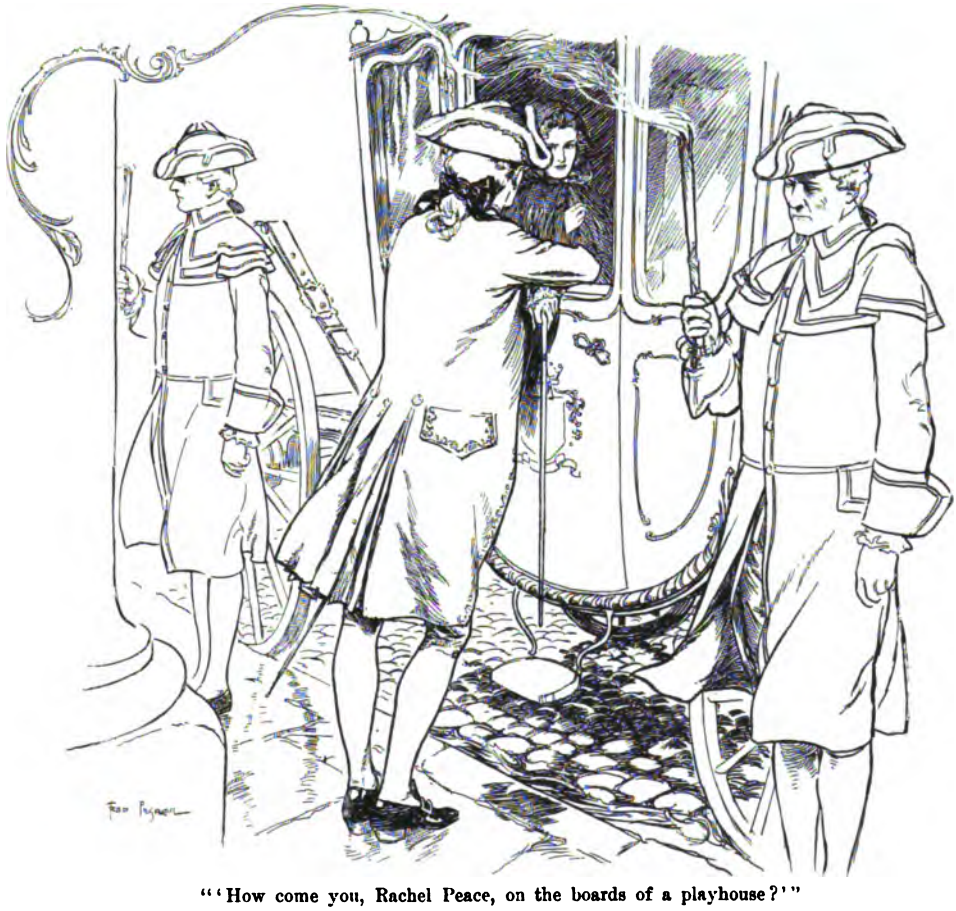

"'How come you, Rachel Peace, on the boards of a playhouse?'"

"he can see both sides of things at once. And 'tis a prodigious advantage, sir."

* * * * *

The slope of the Haymarket was being scoured by the rain of a September tempest. The gutters were rushing streams, the black roofs dripping. Foul old London was pure for an hour, the moist air vivifying. Rachel, on Lord Mandeville's arm, halted involuntarily under the porch.

"Oh," she cried, "how fresh, how clean, after that scent, that heat of the green-room! . . . Oh!" she added, breathing deep, "if it were not for my art!" The exclamation seemed to have escaped her. Quickly she recollected herself and turned to him. "Nay," she said now, "it is raining still. I pray you call me a sedan and keep your coach, sir."

And, for the first time that evening, Lord Mandeville in his turn smiled.

"A little rain will not hurt me," he said gently. "Nay, nay, 'tis I pray you. My running footman shall escort you—you shall tell him yourself where you wish to be driven. I do prefer to walk."

If she had a lingering doubt of him, it then vanished. She stepped into his coach, the Quaker girl, as the Queen into her state-carriage. And it pleased him to bend before her as before majesty itself. But he paused at the coach window, looking in upon her lingeringly, and could not bring himself to give the signal for driving on. The light from the footman's link and the lamps of the portal fell full upon her face. He thought his eyes had never beheld anything so fair.

"How come you," he said after a while, "how come you, Rachel Peace, on the boards of a playhouse?"

The soft eyes, fixed upon his, shone as through a mist of tears they would not shed. Her lips quivered. He tightened his hand upon the ledge of the coach window to keep

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back the mad impulse of seizing her to his breast.

"Oh! I have done wrong, I know," she said. "I fear I have broken my father's heart. But I cannot go back—I cannot!" A sudden passion shook her; she wrung her slender hands. "Sir," she cried, "I have no mother. . . . I cannot think that God meant that we should live such lives—God who made all the things beautiful, who gave us eyes to see, lips for laughter. Oh! you in the world, who see in the odd ways of Quakers nothing but food for jest . . . could you but know the long tragedy of a Quaker home to the young soul, I believe it might rather draw your tears!"

Lord Mandeville, though he had a sense of humour of his own, found nothing comic that he, of all men, should be selected for this confidence. And truly there must have been, even in his silence, some strange quality of sympathy; for, after a pause, the girl, with the thrill of unshed tears in her golden voice, went on:

"But I could have borne it. My father is a just man; and, though mere justice is cold comfort, I could have born to bide with him, had he been content that I should do so."

She shuddered and fell silent.

"He wanted to wed you against your will," said Mandeville, by some quick intuition of an indignant mind leaping at her story.

"Oh!" she answered quickly, "it was to a worthy man—a Friend of great standing among us, of many virtues. My father meant well, doubtless. But I—it would have been a crime! Sir, I was forced to break the Commandment and disobey my father, for I carry in my heart another Commandment, and it I could not violate."

The passion had come back upon her. Her velvet eye flashed, and the gathering tears suddenly fell and rolled down her cheeks. Mandeville leaned in and whispered:

"You could not wed where you did not love?"

"Verily, I would rather die."

"And verily it is well said," he answered. And there was no mockery, but a deep earnestness, in his echo of her asseveration. "And so," he added, after a pause, "poor Quaker dove, your white wings have taken you among all these painted birds, these jays and peacocks—these Pommeroys, these De Vynes and Mortemars!" Once again there came a silence between them. Then, glancing down, he said suddenly and with a change of tone: "'Twas the easier, flight, perhaps; and doubtless——"

"Nay, nay," she interposed; "do not so mistake me. I would hold it shame, now, having taken my life into my own hands, did I not employ it, for I believe Heaven meant me so to do. Sir, I know I have my talent, and I will not bury it; now that I am free, I would use it. Mrs. Macnamara has been kind to me . . . in her way . . . I knew her daughter at home. I am already earning a small salary, and she——" Rachel hesitated a moment, and an arch smile crept on her lip—"she instructs me."

"She!" said Mandeville, with his short, loud laugh. Once more he gazed deeply on the girl in his coach; but this time it was with a new point in view. Every inflection of her voice, from passion to pathos, from earnestness to delicate mirth, lingered in his ear like to the strains of music. He remembered her rare gesture, the grace of her every movement. Beneath his gaze, even now as she sat silent, watching him, the shadows of her thoughts were passing upon her countenance as the clouds over a clear lake. Ranting, strutting old Macnamara teach her! "'Tis you," he cried suddenly, "shall teach the world!"

As he spoke, he meant a lordly promise. The Earl of Mandeville had powerful interest in most worlds. . . . But she caught his words only as an encouragement to the artist; and such a beautiful gratitude leaped to her face that he bit his tongue over the coarse proffer of patronage which would have spoilt all.

"Oh, sir! if *you* think something of my gifts, then shall I hope. But, indeed, I had but a poor part to-night."

She had had a part—and he had not seen her! He had sat by Miss Peggy Pommeroy, all that precious time, wondering that life could hold so much tedium. Had there ever been such waste of an evening?

As he leaned into the coach, the rain pattered on his back, hissed into the torches of the linkmen, striped in long slants and snake-lines the farther windows of the coach. From gutter and cobble-stone, roof and pavement, rang out the song of the rain. Ever and anon would come a flying gust, and all the lights of torch and lantern would bend, burn blue, and madly dance. Lord Mandeville's horses stamped and shivered and shook the harness. But his Lordship himself had no thought but to marvel on the snowdrop beauty of the face of Rachel Peace when the lights and shadows played

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on it. All at once his silence and his brooding eye seemed to frighten her; she drew back with a look that woke him, too, from his dream. He instantly moved from the window.

"You would go home," he said formally. "Madam, I wish you good night."

At this, in her woman's way, her heart seemed to smite her that, by unworthy apprehension, she had wronged one so generously courteous.

"Nay," said she, eagerly arresting him, "one word more. Friend, may I not know by what name to remember thee?" Then she blushed and begged him excuse her for that, in spite of all her self-schooling, the old language still came easiest to her tongue.

He broke in abruptly, vowing it was the sweetest he had ever heard; then interrupted himself, afraid of his own vehemence. Here was a flower that scarce could withstand a touch; he caught back at his highest air of ceremony.

"Madam, I have to crave your pardon. I am remiss indeed not to have introduced myself. My name is Mandeville." He drew himself up and bowed; then, looking at her, saw, half piqued and half amused, that the name of which England thought so much had no meaning in her ear. "I am," he went on, with a sort of awkwardness, yet proudly, too, "Lionel Hill-Dare, Earl of Mandeville." And he added with emphasis: "At your service."

"My lord, I did not need the sound of your name nor the sight of the coronet on your coach to tell me that you are great and noble. Amongst us Friends, the outward show is little, but the deeds of the generous heart are much. . . . Good night, my lord."

Her white fingers now clasped the window-frame where his own had rested. He extended his hand.

"Will you then not say: 'Good night . . . friend'?"

At this she smiled, that smile of exquisite archness that had already bereft him of his senses.

"Good night, friend, and thank thee!" said she, and laid her slim, cool hand in his.

He stooped and kissed it.

* * * * *

As he stood, his back against the grimy pillars of the theatre-porch, and watched his coach clattering up the Haymarket, the red torch leaping as the footman ran beside it, all through the downpour, his whole being was aglow. Lord Mandeville the *roué* had found something in himself he had not known he possessed; and, as his coach rounded the corner and was lost to his sight, this thing that he had discovered, behold! 'twas gone from him. She was carrying it away with her. He had given it—nay, had flung it into her pretty hands, this hitherto unknown possession of Lord Mandeville—his heart.

* * * * *

When Mr. Stafford emerged from the theatre, he positively started to see the motionless figure leaning against the pillar. For once, his knowledge of the world was at fault; for once, events had prepared for him a genuine surprise. A sharp exclamation escaped him. Lord Mandeville turned his dreaming eyes, saw the amazed countenance, and read the thought behind it.

"Sir," said he, and took his hat from his head with a certain grandeur of gesture that he could assume at times, "I beg to inform you—and kindly yourself pass the news to your companions—that I have not won the wager."

He turned, replaced his hat, and pensively walked away in the rain.

WHEN WE MEET AGAIN.

IT was in Spring we parted, you and I!
Across the misty hills the sunlight fell;
The larks sprang, singing, to the April sky,
Spring's glory crowned that anguish of farewell.

I wonder whether, when we meet again,
And when I look once more into your eyes,
Spring's joyousness will still that old, old pain,
Whilst sunlight floods the hills of Paradise.

L. G. MOBERLY.

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CONSCIENCE MONEY.

By The Hon. LYMAN GAGE,*

Ex-Secretary to the United States Treasury.

N addition to receipts from customs and internal taxes on tobacco and liquors, and the sale of public lands, the United States Government derives revenue from a variety of sources. There is quite an income from the tax on sealskins, and the rent of islands of Alaska for propagating foxes. Fees for copyright amount to a considerable sum, and the profits on coinage, the dividends paid to the United States by the receivers of railroads, the tax on circulation of national banks, consular and other fees, the sale of old vessels, old customs-house property, old post-offices, penalties for violation of immigration laws and other acts, and a hundred or more other items help to swell the annual revenues of the Government. All these are classed as miscellaneous receipts.

More curious than any other source of income is that which goes to augment what is popularly known as the Conscience Fund. The illustrations which will follow in this article show in a unique way the workings of that mysterious element of being which we all possess, called the conscience.

It is a strange power which suddenly brings before us with hideous and hateful aspect the sins committed perhaps in days when the moral sense was weaker, or when ignorance or passion blinded the judgment. Its accusing voice, once raised, will not be silenced. If rebuked and repressed by the will, it will again surprise us by its imperious, irrepressible cry.

The Government has no agents to collect the sums that find their way into this unique exchequer. It is in no sense a tax; the identity of the contributors to this singular fund is, in the great majority of cases, absolutely unknown, and, of course, the revenue so derived is not taken into consideration in the annual estimates of forthcoming receipts for fiscal years.

The Conscience Fund at the beginning of October, 1901, amounted to £63,819. In other words, the admonitory voice of conscience has prompted citizens of the United States to restore to the Government nearly a third of a million of dollars.

In many instances, the people making restitution explain with heartfelt contrition circumstances attending their transgression. Some testify to having smuggled presents and other articles into the country, evading in adroit ways the vigilance of customs inspectors; some dodged the lawful tribute exacted by internal revenue agents; others, possibly *employés* of the Government, were guilty of petty thievery; and some have felt the sting of conscience for using postage-stamps that had escaped the official canceller. Many of the transgressions were peculiarly original.

The laws and regulations for safeguarding the nation's revenue are stringent and far-reaching, but it is a well-known axiom that human ingenuity cannot devise a law that human ingenuity cannot evade. Therefore, in spite of the nation's unremitting vigilance in collecting public moneys and protecting Federal property, some of its citizens occasionally succeed in carrying out fraudulent schemes against the Government.

All sums restored by the penitent are deposited in the general fund of the Treasury, and, for the purpose of maintaining a statistical record, are credited to the account of "Conscience," and wherever practicable are classified to show in convenient form the source of receipt, such as duties on imports, internal revenue, etc.

But in many instances classification of this anonymous revenue is impossible. For example, a Chicago man some years ago sent one dollar to be deposited in the Conscience Fund, saying that many years before, he had taken a small apple-tree from the Government orchard at Fort Sheridan. The theft had seemed trifling at the time, but the fruit of that forbidden tree had proved bitter.

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Many of the acts of restitution are prompted by religious conviction of wrongdoing in the past. Revivals conducted by the late Mr. Moody were frequently followed by penitent remittances to the Conscience Fund. With few exceptions, the defalcation or theft was committed many years before the act of reparation, the writers confessing to long periods of remorse and grief before finally concluding to set matters right by restoring to the Government the sums defrauded therefrom. So small an offence as the taking of a cent has in some instances caused the offender the deepest grief.

A number of children have contributed to the Conscience Fund. Others, having in their childhood used stamps illegally, have been brought in maturer years to a realising sense of their transgression, and have remorsefully made amends, accompanying their contributions with earnest appeals for forgiveness.

The sums that have been refunded range all the way from what in English money would be a halfpenny to nearly three thousand pounds. While many of the contributions are small, and the offence at the time of its commission seemingly insignificant, other instances of fraud were more serious, and the guilty parties were doubtless shrewd business men, who, evidently by false swearing and adroit smuggling or other means, have avoided lawful tribute to the United States, and who in later years have come to a sensible and businesslike sense of the seriousness of their crimes.

These men have seldom accompanied their remittances with any words of penitence or even explanation, feeling that the simple act of restoring their ill-gotten gain was a sufficient oblation.

The first contribution to the Conscience Fund was in 1811, and the sum was two hundred and fifty dollars. For sixteen years thereafter there was no further contribution to this Fund, but since 1827 there has been a steady inflow of conscience money to the Treasury. Now the contributions amount to considerable sums annually.

The latest large amount came in an envelope postmarked New York, September 25th, 1901, enclosing £1,230 in bills of denominations ranging from £10 to £100. This large sum of money was accompanied by the following statement, unsigned :—

"After much thought I have been convinced that duties were not fully paid as desired, difference estimated at about 2 per cent. The wish now is to rectify what was done during some years ago, and amount is being sent which it is felt must be paid to the U.S. Treasury to discharge those duties and do the right. Above has been great grief."

In this instance, as in all others, acknowledgment was made through the newspapers. I hope that the announcement in this case was seen by the penitent sufferer, and that it brought relief to his tortured mind.

Some of the letters received from children have been affecting in their simplicity. A little girl, fifteen years of age, wrote as follows to President Cleveland :—

"To His Majesty President Cleveland

"DEAR PRESIDENT,—

"I am in a dreadful state of mind, and I thought I would write and tell you all. About two years ago—as near as I can remember it was two years—I used two postage-stamps that had been used before on letters ; perhaps more than two stamps, but can only remember of doing it twice. I did not realise what I had done until lately. My mind is constantly turned on the subject, and I think of it night and day. Now, dear President, will you please forgive me, for I was then but thirteen years old, for I am heartily sorry for what I have done.

"From one of your Subjects."

Another communication in similar strain narrated that the penitent had, when a boy, received a letter upon which the three-cent postage-stamp escaped the canceller. He had removed the stamp and used it, thus "beating" the Government out of three cents. This had been committed twenty years before, but it had never ceased to trouble him. A dime was therefore enclosed to pay the compound interest on three cents, which he imagined would amount to about seven cents.

Reference to these letters at the time in the public prints quickened the conscience of a citizen of Nebraska, who clipped one of the items and, enclosing fifty cents to the Treasurer of the United States, wrote as follows :—

"I enclose a clipping, which is the object of my addressing you. Some time ago I was very much interested in reading this slip, and was glad of a chance to ease my conscience in a small degree. When quite young, I used stamps received on letters which were soiled, having escaped the canceller's vigorous touch. At the time I had

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a vague idea that I was doing wrong, but, believe me, I little realised that it was such a serious crime. I hardly think I used half-a-dozen two-cent stamps, but I send fifty cents to pay for those wrongly used, the interest that may have accumulated, and the remainder to pay for any I may have used and forgotten about.

"I certainly shall not commit the deed again, and while I detest anonymous letters, I am going to send this one in that way.

"Respectfully yours,

"One of the U.S. Penitent Subjects.

"*June 22nd*, 1900."

President McKinley received many letters from the conscience-stricken, who, knowing his tenderness and benignity, threw off all restraint and confessed to their wrongdoing in elaborate detail.

One woman accompanied a small contribution, which she stated was much in excess of the original sum taken, with an impassioned prayer for forgiveness. "Remorse has taken hold of me and I cannot rest," she wrote. She had been prompted to make restitution, she said, by reading the following Scripture lesson (Ezekiel, thirty-third chapter and fifteenth verse)—

"If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die."

She asked forgiveness for withholding her name, saying that if face to face with the President, she would not hesitate to tell him all.

One of the most interesting communications was from a citizen of Portland, Oregon, a Union soldier in the Civil War, who, during that strife had, in some way which he did not explain, succeeded in obtaining £20 unlawfully from the Government.

He had served his country from '61 to '65. His mis-step was taken, he stated, without reflecting on the consequences. He was poor, but was making great efforts to restore the money taken twenty years before, and though the task of raising it seemed herculean to him, he relied, he wrote, "on God's boundless mercy and power for the accomplishment of his purpose." As an instalment on his debt he enclosed a five-dollar bill.

A few months later another instalment of the same amount arrived, and at intervals for several years came additional sums. The Department was requested to keep account and let him know when he had paid up in full, his letters concluding with the prayer, "God help me to do right!"

Not all of the correspondents are equally confiding. One contributor who had in previous years held back the large sum of £1,600 due to the Government, was brought under conviction of his wrong, and proceeded to make amends, but with a prudence readily understood in one who had not at all times been faithful to his obligations, cut a draft for the amount diagonally in half, forwarding one piece to the Treasury with the statement that he would send the remainder upon acknowledgment of the receipt of the first half.

The Treasury Department replied, giving him a formal receipt for his diagonal segment of a draft, and true to his promise he mailed the other portion. These were duly pasted together and collected, and the United States Treasury was by this curious method enriched.

Another man with the same characteristic discretion tore a bill in two parts, sending one to the Treasurer, and the other to the Secretary of the Treasury, each section being accompanied with a letter explaining where the other half of the mutilated bill was to be found. These were put together and deposited in the Conscience Fund.

Others accompany their contributions with remarks that they have done their duty in forwarding the conscience money, and admonishing the Government recipient to do his duty and deposit it in the national Treasury.

In the great majority of cases, however, the senders of money impose implicit confidence in all the agents of the Government through whom bills or drafts must pass. Frequently paper money in large sums comes through the mails to the Conscience Fund without registration or any safeguards save those which protect ordinary letters, the contributors being persuaded that their own remissness and evasion in the past were no criterion of the ethics of the general run of citizens and officials in the United States.

An envelope came from Cleveland filled with old and much worn and crumpled bills, in denominations from one to a hundred dollars, the whole amount being £120. Further than the announcement that it was conscience money, there was nothing to explain the source of the contribution.

It was, doubtless, evident to the postal clerks through whose hands it passed that the envelope contained money; but the sender displayed unquestioning faith in the reliability of the Government channels

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through which it was to flow into the Treasury.

Whenever an address accompanies the money, a certified copy of the certificate of deposit is returned by the Treasury Department. Sometimes the addresses so furnished are fictitious, the conscience-smitten contributors being fearful lest identification would lead to their prosecution on their self-confessed transgression of the laws.

This fear is groundless, as it is the practice of the Government to demand no explanations, and to follow up no clues that might lead to the discovery of the senders. Their conversion to better ways of thinking and their manifest desire to do the right and honourable thing are accepted in good faith by the national Government.

From the time of the first contribution, every deposit has in some way been acknowledged promptly, either through the medium of the Press or through some clergyman or friend acting for the penitent, and this procedure on the part of the Government has, no doubt, encouraged many to listen to the dictates of their better natures and restore to the Government money fraudulently taken or withheld. It frequently happens that penitents have confessed to priest or pastor, and these good men have counselled the guilty ones to make reparation by refunding money to the national Treasury. In such cases the clergyman sometimes acts as intermediary.

Some of the contributions, no doubt, come from persons suffering from excessive self-questioning. A few years ago, a chaplain of a territorial legislature in the West sent £4 10*s*. to the Conscience Fund, accompanying his cheque with a long and vigorous homily explaining his singular contribution.

He had served, he said, only a short time as legislative chaplain, resigning because he had come to the conclusion that the taxpayers should not be compelled to pay indiscriminately for the prayers offered at the opening of the legislature. Many of the taxpayers of his commonwealth, he contended, were not of reverent or religious turn of mind, and it went against his conscience to accept money from men who regarded his message with indifference. Later, the small sum he had received tormented him, and he sent it on to Washington, that it might be merged again with the money of the people.

This instance was regarded as one of extreme introspection. The money had been legally paid the chaplain, but his desire to be rid of it was so urgent, and his grief at having retained it at all was so deep, that, as requested, the money was accepted and deposited in the Treasury.

An old soldier in a letter stated that while in the Army in 1863, he managed during the distribution of bread to get two loaves when he was entitled only to one, and in order to satisfy a reproving conscience he remitted one dollar, "which," he added, "I suppose, will cover the amount with compound interest." The letter bore no signature.

A woman writing from Atkinson, Illinois, and giving her name in full, wrote: "Here is five cents I cheated the Government out of."

A soldier who acknowledged that he had stolen a pine board from the United States Construction Corps in one of the camps around Petersburg, Virginia, during the Civil War, wished to make restitution. The board he appraised to have been worth about fifty cents, but to be sure that he was wiping out his transgression he sent two dollars for the Conscience Fund.

Many of the transgressions, however, involve weightier matters. A citizen of Connecticut sent £100, which he stated was in settlement of his income tax. He had evaded paying it, he explained, because he had not wished to make public in the city in which he lived the nature and extent of his business.

An increasing number of contributions come from Government *employés*, who confess to having taken small articles from offices. Some of the money so received comes in envelopes postmarked "Washington, D.C." Others of similar character come from various cities in the United States. Envelopes containing money for the Conscience Fund are sometimes handed personally to Government officials, the contributors hurrying away before any explanation can be asked.

The bulk of the conscience money comes from persons who have evaded customs duties. Remittances to cover transgression in this line are often very laconic. One contributor sending £100 wrote merely the memorandum: "Due the Government." Another one, enclosing a cheque for the same amount, wrote: "It is conscience money." Another contributor sent fifty dollars with the line: "To pay for presents brought over and not listed." One contributor has sent a half-dozen letters from various points, each letter containing five dollars, to cover evasions of the tariff regulations.

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Frequently sums are deposited by unknown persons with the customs officers of ports and by them forwarded to the Treasury for the Conscience Fund. One man wrote that he once obeyed the law in the letter, but not in the spirit, and that he believed that he owed the Government £5, which he enclosed. Another man wrote that, some years before, he had succeeded in smuggling woollen goods to the value of £2, but that now, looking at things differently, he wished to pay the duty, and enclosed the money.

The greatest sum was received when Mr. Carlisle was Secretary of the Treasury. It was a draft on Morton, Bliss and Co., of New York, for the equivalent of £2,930 sterling, paid to Patrick Collins, Consul-General for the United States in London, by the Rev. Prebendary Barff, Vicar of St. Giles Church, Cripplegate, London, which sum was entrusted to the clergyman by a person who declined to disclose his identity, but with instructions that it was to be forwarded to the Conscience Fund of the United States Treasury.

Some of the contributors go to great pains to conceal their identity. It is a noticeable fact that many envelopes enclosing contributions are mailed at obscure railway-stations, evidently by travellers who employ this expedient to avoid what they imagine might lead to possible detection. All such precautions are needless, as the Treasury Department in no instance gives out the name of the penitent.

Sometimes the superscription and the letter are written in a disguised hand. Other contributors, more careful still, clip letters from newspapers and make up desired words by pasting these together. Many of the letters are written in what appears to be a designedly illiterate style, the purpose doubtless being to shroud thereby the identity of the sender.

Occasionally a letter comes fearlessly written, with the full name and address of the correspondent signed. One letter was received from a woman in one of the large cities, who used her monogram stationery and did not hesitate to confess that she had evaded duties on dresses brought from Europe.

There seems to be a commendable tendency to look upon smuggling, even of small articles, in its true light, and many offenders are finding it morally healthful to square up for past transgressions by contributing to the Conscience Fund.

A friend of mine recently landed from a trip abroad. "I paid a thousand dollars duties on my goods," he said. "I never paid so much before. This time it was an 'honest count' with me. It cost money, but I feel a good deal more respectable."

It is not popular in some quarters to render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and on this account the existence of a Conscience Fund, enabling those overtaken by conviction of sin to do the right thing, has an ethical value not to be gainsaid.

The Government has no wish to encourage the contributions of people suffering from hallucinations, but where one ultra-sensitive man or woman suffers for having taken a postage-stamp, hundreds of hardier offenders who have furtively escaped the payment of the lawful tariff imposed by the Government go about masquerading as honest people; and if the existence of the Conscience Fund and the example of the penitent contributors spread benign contagion among the crowd of impenitent smugglers, the reform will be of benefit to the country in general.

It is a hopeful sign in our republic when citizens voluntarily make reparation to the Government for wrongdoing. "There is," says a celebrated writer, "a Cato in every man, a severe censor of his manners; and he that reverences this judge will seldom do anything he need repent of."

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AN OLD-WORLD MEASURE.

By Lucien Davis, R.I.

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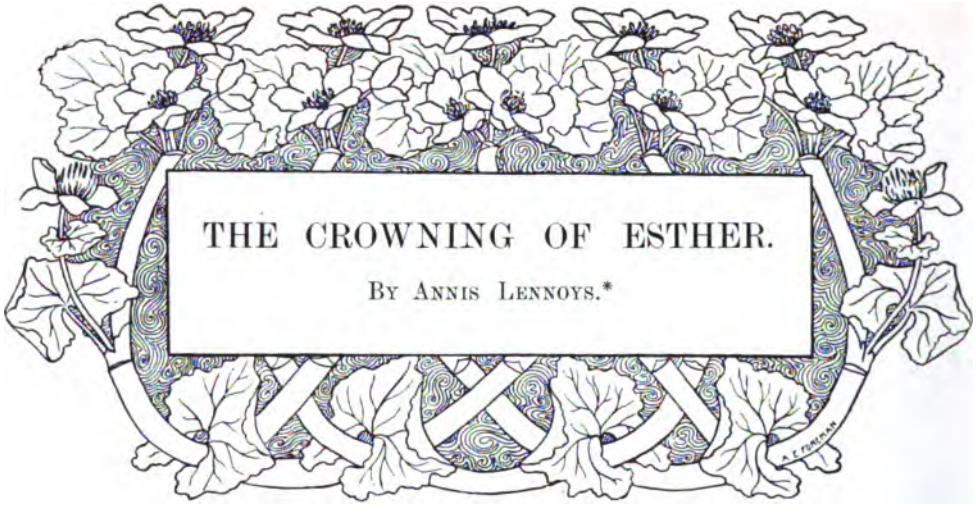

THE CROWNING OF ESTHER.

By Annis Lennoys.*

"JOHNNIE, I do love 'ou! Essie wants 'ou!"

The dark eyes were so coaxing him—what could he do?

John Sterling lifted little "Esther Mary" on to his bench and put his arm round her. It had happened so often before, no one even thought of objecting. Essie's own proper teacher shook her head at Johnnie and smiled, both at once. The Sunday-school superintendent, who taught the class of big boys to which Johnnie belonged, pretended not to notice the intruder. Time had been when the boys had laughed at Johnnie and his little cousin Esther, but they had grown used to "her ways." The winter was almost gone, and Esther soon grew sleepy in these close spring days, which seemed to promise summer before it was wanted.

She leaned her head against Johnnie and listened, as the boys read in turn. When Johnnie's turn came, he pointed with his finger, and she read with him. They were speaking of Queen Esther, and just at the close of the lesson there was a little stir in the class. Esther slipped from Johnnie's side, and going up to the teacher, asked, in an eager voice—

"Please, sir, do all Esthers have crowns? I want one!"

"Are you an Esther, too? Dear me, so you are! Well, I'm afraid we can't get you a crown like hers."

The good man smiled at the eager face as he spoke. The child's face fell, but presently a bright thought came to her aid.

"Thank you, sir," she said, with a little smile. "It doesn't matter. I'll ask Johnnie to get me one."

"I am afraid you are setting your youthful desire——" began the superintendent. What else he meant to say remained unsaid, for Esther had already slipped back to her place by Johnnie's side. Her clear, birdlike voice was easily distinguished from the boys' voices as they joined in the closing hymn. She stood on the bench, her rosy cheeks and dark curls framed by her pretty red hood. Johnnie shared his hymn-book with her. The fading afternoon light shone down on his awkward figure and pale, weak face. When school was over, he carried her off, perched on his shoulders. His mother said he was fairly daft about "me sister Mary's child, who's only we to see arter her, now her father's on the seas." In her secret heart I think Mrs. Sterling was pleased to see how the little five-year-old girlie clung to her Johnnie from the very first day they met.

Cousin Essie, a bustling, merry girl, was everybody's favourite; Johnnie had never been anyone's favourite before. This wee maid ruled him from the first. A dreamy boy—at school a dunce, at home a stupid—only to little Esther did Johnnie show his best self. As they turned down the wide High Street, Esther chatted incessantly, turning her head from side to side as her sharp eyes spied out some object she was curious about.

"When will you get me a crown, Johnnie? I do want one so badly. This nasty hood is so very hot. Will you get me one? A white one would be ever so nice."

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"You couldn't wear it if you had it. Besides, she was a queen—the king gave her her crown."

"You're just as good as a king, Johnnie. I should so like to have one."

"Those sort of goods don't live down our way," said Johnnie bitterly; "but I'll show you a statue of Esther, if that'll do. See, I've brought you this way o' purpose."

"He carried her off, perched on his shoulders."

Esther bent down eagerly to look as he stopped. The confectioner's window was emptied of its glories in honour of the day. Under a tall glass shade, however, stood an alabaster group—Queen Esther knelt at the feet of King Ahasuerus, who was just placing the crown on her head.

Johnnie had often noticed it, and thought of the queen's face as like Essie's. Esther herself gazed with delight at the beautiful figures. As her quick eyes looked at every detail, she pulled impatiently at Johnnie's hair.

"Read the words at the bottom, Johnnie. Do be quick and come home; I want my tea."

"'The king loved Esther . . . so that he set the royal crown upon her head.' We'll be home in no time," said Johnnie.

"If you loves *me*, Johnnie, couldn't you get *me* a crown?"

Johnnie made no answer as he raced up the streets to their home. He trusted in the buttered scones. "She'll forget all about it when she gets her tea," he thought.

Esther was not one to forget; but she, too, was wise in her small way. So she kept silence, only waiting till Saturday came. She thought Johnnie would take charge of her. But she was disappointed, for Rose took her to see the boys play cricket in the park, and Johnnie was one of the team and had no time to talk to her.

"Rosie is cross—I shan't stay with her!" said Essie to herself. And though her cousin called her back, she took no heed, but ran off towards the fountain. The afternoon wore on, and the boys' match ended with a victory for Johnnie's team. He came up to his sister, bat in hand and flushed with delight. He had only made a duck's egg, but he had forgotten that in his delight at the final victory of his team.

"Where's Esther?" was his first question.

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"I'm sure I don't know," said Rose, tossing her head. "Tiresome little thing! Someone or another's always having to look after that kid!"

Johnnie turned angrily away from her.

"If harm's happened, you'll be sorry," he said significantly.

"She's gone up towards the fountain," said one of the other girls. "I heard her say she was going to make a crown."

Johnnie started to run before the words were fairly out of her mouth. Some of the other boys had a glimpse of his white, frightened face as he toiled up the steep path leading to the pool and fountain.

"What's up with Johnnie?" said one of them. "He looks very scared."

"Always thought he was a fool! Nobody else would dream of tearing all up the steepest parts of the park in that way," said the captain of the team, swinging his bat lazily to and fro as he spoke.

But though several rather wondered, nobody felt it their business to stop the terror-stricken, clumsy-looking boy. Up that path and round up to the steps leading to the little rustic bridge. Yes, there she was! Johnnie breathed more freely as he caught sight of the little, rosy face.

"Essie! Wait a moment! Johnnie is coming!" he shouted.

Essie half turned her head to listen. She heard him and hesitated a moment. Only a moment, though. The next instant her little feet had clambered on to the railing, and she stretched out her hands eagerly towards the snowy balls of blossom on the big guelder-rose bushes on either bank of the stream below. She stretched out her hand, and her little cry of triumph just met Johnnie's ears as he ran towards her.

"All right, Johnnie! Essie's got some white flowers for her——"

The gay little, laugh and voice ended abruptly. Johnnie came just too late to save the little, restless figure—restless and now gone! For one moment Johnnie stared blankly down, and there, catching a fleeting glimpse of a tiny form in the deep water, over which the guelders bent, he, too, climbed up and over. Catching the branches as he plunged madly down, he landed on the banks, trembling and eager. She was not far away. He could see her right out in the centre of the pond. He had seen a boy drowned there, and he knew how deep it was. As the thought flashed through his brain, his face grew even paler. Essie was not dead yet. He might die with her if he couldn't save her.

"Johnnie!" her voice came faintly to him.

Other folks heard them by this time, and one of the park-keepers came running down to the boat moored on the further side. Johnnie never heeded them. With set teeth and resolute heart he walked hurriedly in, deeper and deeper, till he was up to his shoulders and hardly able to keep his footing. His bat, which somehow he never thought of throwing away, was still in his hand, and served to steady him. Essie had ceased struggling, and was just sinking as he reached her.

How the boys, who had gathered even in these few minutes, cheered as they saw him grasp Essie in his arms and try to lift her above the water! He had not strength for that. He could only hold her and stand with her dark curls touching his fair head. The water filled his ears and numbed his limbs. He never heard the shouts or saw the boat come up. It was only a brief space he stood, but it seemed to him a lifetime.

"Now then, give me the girl, and you scramble in," said the park-keeper. But Johnnie could not, so the keeper shipped his oars and somehow hauled the two on board. Johnnie never answered his questions, only held Essie tight in his arms. What a time it seemed before those dark eyes opened! Johnnie took no notice of the advice to "Run home quick and change!" He stood by Essie. He felt as if he was fully repaid when Essie's voice asked for "Johnnie."

"It's all right," he said. "I guess I'll look after you myself next time."

"I won't never try an' get a crown again."

"Best not let her talk. And now, my lad, you run off sharp. Tell your mother we'll bring the little girl along," said a doctor who had been called up. "You can't run, perhaps? Stiff, are you?" as Johnnie stumbled.

"I'll go home with him. He's my brother," said Rose, who had made her way up with the rest.

"I'll be hanged if you do!" said Johnnie. "Griffiths, give me a hand, will you?"

His classmates did not wait for the answer. They would have carried Johnnie home if he would have allowed them to.

Mother's fright at Johnnie's dripping form took the shape of action, and he was in bed, and warm drink and every remedy she could think of well under way, before Essie came.

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"Stretched out her hands eagerly towards the snowy balls of blossom."

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Then her aunt found time to listen to details. Her pride in Johnnie was only equalled by her anger with Rose.

However, she rightly read the girl's pale face and said very little to her.

"Johnnie," said Essie, as she kissed him good-night, "I did want that crown, but I won't never any more. Auntie says we might have been drownded dead."

"We'll wait a bit, Essie," said Johnnie. "One day, when I'm a man, you shall have one."

"You're a nice boy, and I love you," said she.

* * * * *

There was just the same stupid look on Johnnie's face, and Essie clung to him, only a little paler than usual, as they walked into school next morning. Nobody laughed at them. The superintendent kissed Essie, and the vicar found a sixpence which he slipped into her tiny hand. The choir-boys crowded round the two as they came into the service. They could not tell what to make of Johnnie, for he seemed so unconscious of any merit, and Essie was too shy to say much.

"Wait a bit, you two," said the organist, when the service was over.

And they waited.

"Johnnie," said the organist, laying his hand on the boy's shoulder, "the boy who was so brave yesterday can't be a fool. What is there you really care to learn about?"

Johnnie hesitated, but Essie lifted her eyes shyly and said—

"Johnnie wants to play your music thing, sir; and he isn't a stupid boy."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, please, sir," said Johnnie.

"Very well, then, Johnnie, we'll see about it."

"Provided you're a very good boy," said the vicar warningly.

"Johnnie's always a dood boy," said Essie.

* * * * *

The old vicar is getting feeble nowadays, but he manages to make his way every month to the new Town Hall to listen to the organ recital, for it is his pride to relate that the famous organist, whom the Corporation so highly value, was once a stupid choir-boy of his own church.

"He had plenty of pluck, and he was a brave lad, and a lad bound to win in the end," he will say. Sometimes he will stop to speak to a dark-eyed and rarely beautiful woman who is always to be seen there—the organist's wife, or "Mrs. Johnnie," as some folk call her.

Johnnie never gave her a queen's crown, and she never asks for it now. Sometimes he reminds her of her childish longings, and always her answer satisfies him.

"Johnnie, I know your love has crowned me always, and that makes me so happy—I would not change it for the crown royal itself. Esther of old was a woman, too, and I think the love of the king was worth more to her than the crown."

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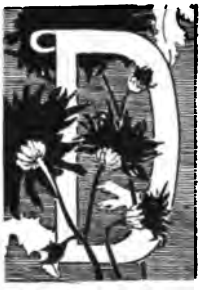
THE LEOPARD MAN'S STORY.

By JACK LONDON.*



DREAMY, far-away was the look in his eyes, and his sad, insistent voice, gentle-spoken as a maid's, seemed the placid embodiment of some deep-seated melancholy. He was the Leopard Man, but he did not look it. His business in life, whereby he lived, was to appear in a cage of performing leopards before vast audiences, and to thrill those audiences by certain exhibitions of nerve, for which his employers rewarded him on a scale commensurate with the thrills he produced.

As I say, he did not look it. He was narrow-hipped, narrow-shouldered, and anæmic, while he seemed not so much oppressed by gloom as by a sweet and gentle sadness, the weight of which was as sweetly and gently borne. For an hour I had been trying to get a story out of him, but he appeared to lack imagination. To him there was no romance in his gorgeous career, no deeds of daring, no thrills—nothing but a grey sameness and infinite boredom.

Lions? Oh, yes! he had fought with them. It was nothing. All you had to do was to stay sober. Anybody could whip a lion to a standstill with an ordinary stick. He had fought one for half-an-hour once. Just hit him on the nose every time he rushed; and when he got artful and rushed with his head down, why, the thing to do was to stick out your leg. When he grabbed at the leg, you drew it back and hit him on the nose again. That was all.

With the far-away look in his eyes and his soft flow of words, he showed me his scars. There were many of them, and one recent one, where a tigress had reached for his shoulder and gone down to the bone. I could see the neatly mended rents in the coat he had on. His right arm, from the elbow down, looked as though it had gone through a threshing-machine, what of the ravage wrought by claws and fangs. But it was nothing, he said, only the old wounds bothered him somewhat when rainy weather came on.

Suddenly his face brightened with a recollection, for he was really as anxious to give me a story as I was to get it.

"I suppose you've heard of the lion-tamer who was hated by another man?" he asked.

He paused and looked pensively at a sick lion in the cage opposite.

"Got the toothache," he explained. "Well, the lion-tamer's big play to the audience was putting his head in a lion's mouth. The man who hated him attended every performance in the hope some time of seeing that lion crunch down. He followed the show about all over the country. The years went by, and he grew old, and the lion-tamer grew old, and the lion grew old. And at last, one day, sitting in a front seat, he saw what he had waited for. The lion crunched down, and there wasn't any need to call a doctor."

"The Leopard Man."

The Leopard Man glanced casually over his finger-nails in a manner which would have been critical had it not been so sad.

"Now that's what I call patience," he continued, "and it's my style. But it was not the style of a fellow I knew. He was a little, thin, sawed-off, sword-swallowing and juggling Frenchman. De Ville he called himself, and he had a nice wife. She did trapeze work and used to dive from under the roof into a net, turning over once on the way as nice as you please.

"De Ville had a quick temper, as quick as his hand, and his hand was as quick as the paw of a tiger. One day, because the ring-master called him a frog-eater, or something like that and maybe a little worse, he shoved him against the soft pine background he used in his knife-throwing act so quick the ring-master didn't have time to think, and there,

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before the audience, De Ville kept the air on fire with his knives, sinking them into the wood all around the ringmaster so close that they passed through his clothes, and most of them bit into his skin.

"The clowns had to pull the knives out to get him loose, for he was pinned fast. So

"'A quarrel between a couple of trapeze artists.'"

the word went around to watch out for De Ville, and no one dared be more than barely civil to his wife. And she was a sly bit of baggage, too, only all hands were afraid of De Ville.

"But there was one man, Wallace, who was afraid of nothing. He was the lion-tamer, and he had the self-same trick of putting his head into the lion's mouth. He'd put it into the mouths of any of them, though he preferred Augustus, a big, good-natured beast who could always be depended upon.

"As I was saying, Wallace—'King' Wallace we called him—was afraid of nothing, alive or dead. He was a king, and no mistake. I've seen him drunk, and on a wager go into the cage of a lion that'd turned nasty, and without a stick beat him to a finish. Just did it with his fist on the nose.

"Madame De Ville——"

At an uproar behind us the Leopard Man turned quietly around. It was a divided cage, and a monkey, poking through the bars and around the partition, had had its paw seized by a big grey wolf, who was trying to pull it off by main strength. The arm seemed stretching out longer and longer, like a thick elastic, and the unfortunate monkey's mates were raising a terrible din. No keeper was at hand, so the Leopard Man stepped over a couple of paces, dealt the wolf a sharp blow on the nose with the light cane he carried, and returned with a sadly apologetic smile to take up his unfinished sentence as though there had been no interruption.

"——looked at King Wallace, and King Wallace looked at her, while De Ville looked black. We warned Wallace, but it was no use. He laughed at us, as he laughed at De Ville one day in Kansas City when he shoved De Ville's head into a bucket of paste because he wanted to fight.

"De Ville was in a pretty mess—I helped to scrape him off; but he was cool as a cucumber and made no threats at all. But I saw a glitter in his eyes which I had seen often in the eyes of wild beasts, and I went out of my way to give Wallace a final warning. He laughed, as usual, but he did not look so much in Madame De Ville's direction after that.

"Several months passed by. Nothing had happened, and I was beginning to think it all a scare over nothing. We were West by that time, showing in 'Frisco. It was during the afternoon performance, and the big tent was filled with women and children, when I went looking for Red Denny, the head canvas-man, who had walked off with my pocket-knife. It was a mean habit of his, and as soon as my turn before the audience was over, I started to look him up.

"Passing by one of the dressing-tents, I glanced in through a hole in the canvas to see if I could locate him. He wasn't there, but directly in front of me was King Wallace, in tights, waiting for his turn to go on with his cage of performing lions. He was watching with much amusement a quarrel between a couple of trapeze artists. All the rest of the people in the dressing-tent were watching the

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same thing, with the exception of De Ville, whom I noticed staring at Wallace with undisguised hatred. Wallace and the rest were all too busy following the quarrel to notice this or what followed.

"But I saw it through the hole in the canvas. De Ville drew his handkerchief from his pocket, made as though to mop the sweat from his face with it (it was a hot day), and at the same time walked past Wallace's back. He never stopped, but kept right on to the doorway, where he turned his head, while passing out, and shot a swift look back at the unconscious man. The look troubled me at the time, for not only did I see hatred in it, but I saw triumph as well.

"'De Ville will bear watching,' I said to myself, and I really breathed easier when I saw him go out the entrance to the circus ground and board an electric car for down-town. A few minutes later I was in the big tent, where I had overhauled Red Denny. King Wallace was doing his turn and holding the audience spellbound. He was in a particularly vicious mood, and he kept the lions stirred up till they were snarling and growling all around him. All of them were, except old Augustus, and he was just too fat and lazy and old to get stirred up over anything.

"Finally Wallace cracked the old lion's knees with his whip and got him into position. Old Augustus, blinking good-naturedly, opened his mouth, and in popped Wallace's head. Then the jaws came together, 'crunch,' just like that."

The Leopard Man smiled in a sweetly wistful fashion, and the far-away look came into his eyes.

"And that was the end of King Wallace," he went on in his sad, low voice. "After the excitement cooled down I watched my chance, and bent over and smelled Wallace's head. Then I sneezed."

"It . . . it was . . . ?" I queried, with halting eagerness.

"Snuff—that De Ville dropped on his hair in the dressing-tent. Old Augustus never meant to do it. He only sneezed."

ON THE BEACH AT SCHEVENINGEN.
FROM THE PICTURE BY PHILIP SADÉE.
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TOMMY & CO.

By JEROME K. JEROME.*

No. IV.—MRS. LOVEREDGE RECEIVES.

THE most popular member of the Autolycus Club was undoubtedly Joseph Loveredge. Small, chubby, clean-shaven, his somewhat longish, soft, brown hair parted in the middle, strangers fell into the error of assuming him to be younger than he really was. It is on record that a leading lady novelist—accepting her at her own estimate—irritated by his polite but firm refusal to allow her entrance into his own editorial office without appointment, had once boxed his ears, under the impression that he was his own office-boy. Guests to the Autolycus Club, on being introduced to him, would give to him kind messages to take home to his father, with whom they remembered having been at school together. This sort of thing might have annoyed anyone with less sense of humour. Joseph Loveredge would tell such stories himself, keenly enjoying the jest—was even suspected of inventing some of the more improbable. Another fact tending to the popularity of Joseph Loveredge among all classes, over and above his amiability, his wit, his genuine kindliness, and his never-failing fund of good stories, was that by care and inclination he had succeeded in remaining a bachelor. Many had been the attempts to capture him; nor with the passing of the years had interest in the sport shown any sign of diminution. Well over the frailties and distempers so dangerous to youth, of staid and sober habits, with an ever-increasing capital invested in sound securities, together with an ever-increasing income from his pen, with a tastefully furnished house overlooking Regent's Park, an excellent and devoted cook and housekeeper, and relatives mostly settled in the Colonies, Joseph Loveredge, though inexperienced girls might pass him by with a contemptuous sniff, was recognised by ladies of maturer judgment as a prize not too often dangled before the eyes of spinsterhood. Old foxes—so we are assured by kind-hearted country gentlemen—rather enjoy than otherwise a day with the hounds. However that may be, certain it is that Joseph Loveredge, confident of himself, one presumes, showed no particular disinclination to the chase. Perhaps on the whole he preferred the society of his own sex, with whom he could laugh and jest with more freedom, to whom he could tell his stories as they came to him, without the trouble of having to turn them over first in his own mind; but, on the other hand, Joey made no attempt to avoid female company whenever it came his way; and then no cavalier could render himself more agreeable, more unobtrusively attentive. Younger men stood by in envious admiration of the ease with which in five minutes he would establish himself on terms of cosy friendship with the brilliant beauty before whose gracious coldness they had stood shivering for months; the daring with which he would tuck under his arm, so to speak, the prettiest girl in the room, smooth down as if by magic her hundred prickles, and tease her out of her overwhelming sense of her own self-importance. The secret of his success was, probably, that he was not afraid of them. Desiring nothing from them beyond companionableness, a reasonable amount of appreciation for his jokes—which without being exceptionally stupid they would have found it difficult to withhold—with just sufficient information and intelligence to make conversation interesting, there was nothing about him by which they could lay hold of him. Of course, that rendered them particularly anxious to lay hold of him. Joseph's lady friends might, roughly speaking, be divided into two groups: the unmarried, who wanted to marry him to themselves; and the married, who wanted to marry him to somebody else. It would be a social disaster, the latter had agreed among themselves, if Joseph Loveredge should never wed.

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"He would make such an excellent husband for poor Bridget."

"Or Gladys. I wonder how old Gladys really is?"

"Such a nice, kind little man."

"And when one thinks of the sort of men that *are* married, it does seem such a pity!"

"Boxed his ears, under the impression that he was his own office-boy."

"I wonder why he never has married, because he's just the sort of man you'd think *would* have married."

"I wonder if he ever was in love."

"Oh, my dear, you don't mean to tell me that a man has reached the age of forty without ever being in love!"

The ladies would sigh.

"I do hope if ever he does marry, it will be somebody nice. Men are so easily deceived."

"I shouldn't be surprised myself a bit if something came of it with Bridget. She's a dear girl, Bridget—so genuine."

"Well, I think myself, dear, if it's anyone, it's Gladys. I should be so glad to see poor dear Gladys settled."

The unmarried kept their thoughts more to themselves. Each one, upon reflection, saw ground for thinking that Joseph Loveredge had given proof of feeling preference for herself. The irritating thing was that, on further reflection, it was equally clear that Joseph Loveredge had shown signs of preferring most of the others also.

Meanwhile Joseph Loveredge went undisturbed upon his way. At eight o'clock in the morning, Joseph's housekeeper entered the room with a cup of tea and a dry biscuit. At eight-fifteen, Joseph Loveredge arose and performed complicated exercises on an indiarubber pulley, warranted, if persevered in, to bestow grace upon the figure and elasticity upon the limbs. Joseph Loveredge persevered steadily, and had done so for years, and was himself contented with the result, which, seeing it concerned nobody else, was all that could be desired. At half-past eight on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, Joseph Loveredge breakfasted on one cup of tea, brewed by himself; one egg, boiled by himself; and two pieces of toast, the first one spread with marmalade, the second with butter. On Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, Joseph Loveredge discarded eggs and ate a rasher of bacon. On Sundays, Joseph Loveredge had both eggs and bacon, but then allowed himself half-an-hour longer for reading the paper. At nine-thirty, Joseph Loveredge left the house for the office of the old-established evening paper that he edited. At one-forty-five, having left his office at one-thirty, Joseph Loveredge entered the Autolycus Club and sat down to lunch. Everything else in Joseph's life was arranged with similar preciseness, so far as was possible with the duties of an editor: his daily rubber of whist—the result, carefully recorded,

showed that during the ten years he had taken to the game he had lost precisely four-and-sixpence; his one evening at the theatre; his one evening with musical friends at Brixton. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, he was open to receive invitations out to dinner; on Wednesdays and Saturdays, he invited four friends to dine with him at Regent's Park. On Sundays, whatever the season, Joseph Loveredge took an excursion into the country. He had his regular hours for reading, his regular hours for thinking. Whether in Fleet Street or the Tyrol, on the Thames or in the Vatican, you might recognise him from afar by his grey frock-coat, his patent-leather boots, his brown felt hat, his lavender tie. The man was a born bachelor. When the news of his engagement crept through the smoky portals of the Autolycus Club, nobody believed it.

"Impossible!" asserted Jack Herring. "I've known Joey's life for fifteen years. Every five minutes is arranged for. He could never have found the time to do it."

"He doesn't like women, not in that way; I've heard him say so," explained Alexander the Poet. "His opinion is that women are the artists of Society—delightful as entertainers, but troublesome to live with."

"I call to mind," said the Wee Laddie, "a story he told me in this verra room, barely three months agone: Some half-a-dozen of them were going home together from the Devonshire. They had had a joyous evening, and one of them—Joey did not notice which—suggested their dropping in at his place just for a final whisky. They were laughing and talking in the dining-room, when their hostess suddenly appeared upon the scene in a costume—so Joey described it—the charm of which was its variety. She was a nice-looking woman, Joey said, but talked too much; and when the first lull occurred, Joey turned to the man sitting nighest to him, and who looked bored, and suggested in a whisper that it was about time they went.

"'Perhaps you had better go,' assented the bored-looking man. 'Wish I could come with you; but, you see, I live here.'"

"I don't believe it," said Somerville the Briefless. "He's been cracking his jokes, and some silly woman has taken him seriously."

But the rumour grew into report, developed detail, lost all charm, expanded into plain recital of fact. Joey had not been seen within the Club for more than a week—in itself a deadly confirmation. The question became: Who was she—what was she like?

"It's none of our set, or we should have heard something from her side before now," argued acutely Somerville the Briefless.

"Some beastly kid who will invite us to dances and forget the supper," feared Johnny Bulstrode, commonly called the Babe. "Old men always fall in love with young girls."

"Forty," explained severely Peter Hope, editor and part proprietor of *Good Humour*, "is not old."

"Well, it isn't young," persisted Johnny.

"Good thing for you, Johnny, if it is a girl," thought Jack Herring. "Somebody for you to play with. I often feel sorry for you, having nobody but grown-up people to talk to."

"They do get a bit stodgy after a certain age," agreed the Babe.

"I am hoping," said Peter, "it will be some sensible, pleasant woman, a little over thirty. He is a dear fellow, Loveredge; and forty is a very good age for a man to marry."

"Well, if I'm not married before I'm forty——" said the Babe.

"Oh, don't you fret," Jack Herring interrupted him—"a pretty boy like you! We will give a ball next season, and bring you out, if you're good—get you off our hands in no time."

It was August. Joey went away for his holiday without again entering the Club. The lady's name was Henrietta Elizabeth Doone. It was said by the *Morning Post* that she was connected with the Doones of Gloucestershire.

"Doones of Gloucestershire—Doones of Gloucestershire," mused Miss Bragshot, Society journalist, discussing the matter with Peter Hope in the editorial office of *Good Humour*. "Knew a Doon who kept a big second-hand store in Euston Road and called himself an auctioneer. He bought a small place in Gloucestershire and added an 'e' to his name. Wonder if it's the same?"

"I had a cat called Elizabeth once," said Peter Hope.

"I don't see what that's got to do with it."

"No, of course not," agreed Peter. "But I was rather fond of it. It was a quaint sort of animal, considered as a cat—would never speak to another cat, and hated being out after ten o'clock at night."

"What happened to it?" demanded Miss Bragshot.

"Fell off a roof," sighed Peter Hope. "Wasn't used to it."

The marriage took place abroad, at the

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English Church at Montreux. Mr. and Mrs. Loveredge returned at the end of September. The Autolycus Club subscribed to send a present of a punch-bowl, left cards, and waited with curiosity to see the bride. But no invitation arrived. Nor for a month was Joey himself seen within the Club. Then, one foggy afternoon, waking after a doze, with a cold cigar in his mouth, Jack Herring noticed he was not the only occupant of the smoking-room. In a far corner, near a window, sat Joseph Loveredge, reading a magazine. Jack Herring rubbed his eyes, then rose and crossed the room.

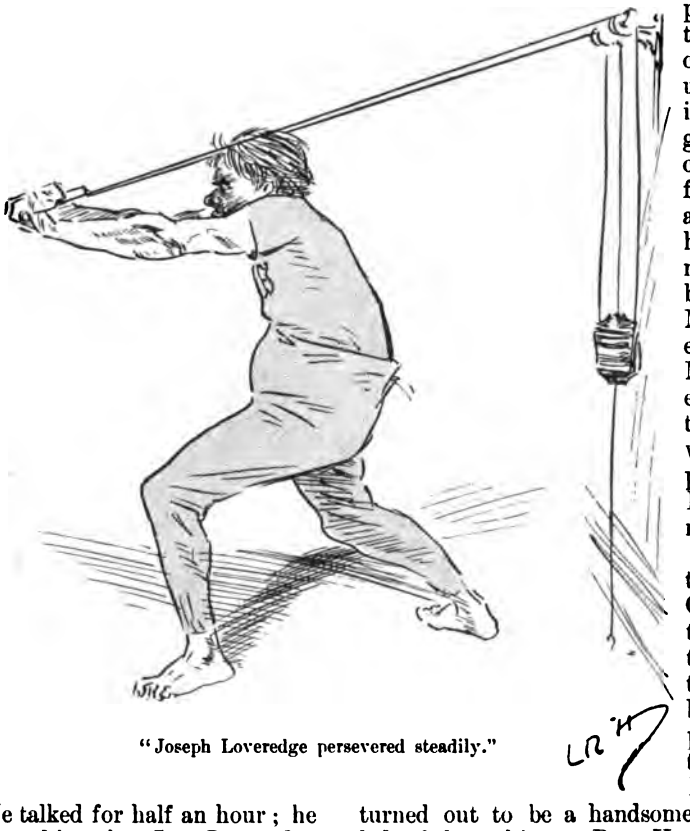
"I thought at first," explained Jack Herring, recounting the incident later in the evening, "that I must be dreaming. There he sat, drinking his five o'clock whisky-and-soda, the same Joey Loveredge I had known for fifteen years; yet not the same. Not a feature altered, not a hair on his head changed, yet the whole face was different; the same body, the same clothes, but another man. We talked for half an hour; he remembered everything that Joey Loveredge had known. I couldn't understand it. Then, as the clock struck, and he rose, saying he must be home at half-past five, the explanation suddenly occurred to me: *Joey Loveredge was dead; this was a married man.*"

"We don't want your feeble efforts at psychological romance," told him Somerville the Briefless. "We want to know what you talked about. Dead or married, the man who can drink whisky-and-soda must be held responsible for his actions. What's the little beggar mean by cutting us all in this way? Did he ask after any of us? Did he leave any message for any of us? Did he invite any of us to come and see him?"

"Yes, he did ask after nearly everybody; I was coming to that. But he didn't leave any message. I didn't gather that he was pining for old relationships with any of us."

"Well, I shall go round to the office tomorrow morning," said Somerville the Briefless, "and force my way in if necessary. This is getting mysterious."

But Somerville returned only to puzzle the Autolycus Club still further. Joey had talked about the weather, the state of political parties, had received with unfeigned interest all gossip concerning his old friends; but about himself, his wife, nothing had been gleaned. Mrs. Loveredge was well; Mrs. Loveredge's relations were also well. But at present Mrs. Loveredge was not receiving.



"Joseph Loveredge persevered steadily."

Members of the Autolycus Club with time upon their hands took up the business of private detectives. Mrs. Loveredge turned out to be a handsome, well-dressed lady of about thirty, as Peter Hope had desired. At eleven in the morning, Mrs. Loveredge shopped in the neighbourhood of the Hampstead Road. In the afternoon, Mrs. Loveredge, in a hired carriage, would slowly promenade the Park, looking, it was noticed, with intense interest at the occupants of other carriages as they passed, but evidently having no acquaintances among them. The carriage, as a general rule, would call at Joey's office at five, and Mr. and Mrs. Loveredge would drive home. Jack Herring, as the oldest friend, urged by the other members, took the bull by the horns and

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called boldly. On neither occasion was Mrs. Loveredge at home.

"I'm hanged if I go again!" said Jack. "She was in the second time, I know. I watched her into the house. Confound the stuck-up pair of them!"

Bewilderment gave place to indignation. Now and again Joey would creep, a mental shadow of his former self, into the Club where once every member would have risen with a smile to greet him. They gave him curt answers and turned away from him. Peter Hope one afternoon found him there alone, standing with his hands in his pockets looking out of window. Peter was fifty, so he said, maybe a little older; men of forty were to him mere boys. So Peter, who hated mysteries, stepped forward with a determined air and clapped Joey on the shoulder.

"I want to know, Joey," said Peter, "I want to know whether I am to go on liking you, or whether I've got to think poorly of you. Out with it."

Joey turned to him a face so full of misery that Peter's heart was touched. "You can't tell how wretched it makes me," said Joey. "I didn't know it was possible to feel so uncomfortable as I have felt during these last three months."

"It's the wife, I suppose?" suggested Peter."

"She's a dear girl. She only has one fault."

"It's a pretty big one," returned Peter. "I should try and break her of it if I were you."

"Break her of it!" cried the little man. "You might as well advise me to break a brick wall with my head. I had no idea what they were like. I never dreamt it."

"But what is her objection to us? We are clean, we are fairly intelligent——"

"My dear Peter, do you think I haven't said all that, and a hundred things more? A woman! she gets an idea into her head, and every argument against it hammers it in further. She has gained her notion of what she calls Bohemia from the comic journals. It's our own fault, we have done it ourselves. There's no persuading her that it's a libel."

"Won't she see a few of us—judge for herself? There's Porson—why, Porson might have been a bishop. Or Somerville—Somerville's Oxford accent is wasted here. It has no chance."

"It isn't only that," explained Joey; "she has ambitions, social ambitions. She thinks that if we begin with the wrong set, we'll never get into the right. We have three friends at present, and, so far as I can see, are never likely to have any more. My dear boy, you'd never believe there could exist such bores. There's a man and his wife named Holyoake. They dine with us on Thursdays, and we dine with them on Tuesdays. Their only title to existence consists in their having a cousin in the House of Lords; they claim no other right themselves. He is a widower, getting on for eighty. Apparently he's the only relative they have, and when he dies, they talk of retiring into the country. There's a fellow named Cutler, who visited once at Marlborough House in connection with a charity. You'd think to listen to him that he had designs upon the Throne. The most tiresome of them all is a noisy woman who, as far as I can make out, hasn't any name at all. 'Miss Montgomery' is on her cards, but that is only what she calls herself. Who she really is! It would shake the foundations of European Society if known. We sit and talk about the aristocracy; we don't seem to know anybody else. I tried on one occasion a little sarcasm as a corrective—recounted conversations between myself and the Prince of Wales, in which I invariably addressed him as 'Teddy.' It sounds tall, I know, but those people took it in. I was too astonished to undeceive them at the time, the consequence is I am a sort of little god to them. They come round me and ask for more. What am I to do? I am helpless among them. I've never had anything to do before with the really first-prize idiot; the usual type, of course, one knows, but these, if you haven't met them, are inconceivable. I try insulting them; they don't even know I am insulting them. Short of dragging them out of their chairs and kicking them round the room, I don't see how to make them understand it."

"And Mrs. Loveredge?" asked the sympathetic Peter, "is she——"

"Between ourselves," said Joey, sinking his voice to a needless whisper, seeing he and Peter were the sole occupants of the smoking-room—"I couldn't, of course, say it to a younger man—but between ourselves, my wife is a charming woman. You don't know her."

"Doesn't seem much chance of my ever doing so," laughed Peter.

"So graceful, so dignified, so—so queenly," continued the little man, with rising enthusiasm. "She has only one fault—she has no sense of humour."

To Peter, as it has been said, men of forty

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were mere boys. "My dear fellow, whatever could have induced you——"

"I know—I know all that," interrupted the mere boy. "Nature arranges it on purpose. Tall and solemn prigs marry little women with turned-up noses. Cheerful little fellows like myself—we marry serious, stately women. If it were otherwise, the human race would be split up into species."

"Of course, if you were actuated by a sense of public duty——"

"Don't be a fool, Peter Hope," returned the little man. "I'm in love with my wife just as she is, and always shall be. I know the woman with a sense of humour, and of the two I prefer the one without. The Juno type is my ideal. I must take the rough with the smooth. One can't have a jolly, chirpy Juno, and wouldn't care for her if one could."

"Then are you going to give up all your old friends?"

"Don't suggest it," pleaded the little man. "You don't know how miserable it makes me, the mere idea. Tell them to be patient. The secret of dealing with women, I have found, is to do nothing rashly." The clock struck five. "I must go now," said Joey. "Don't misjudge her, Peter, and don't let the others. She's a dear girl. You'll like her, all of you, when you know her. A dear girl! She only has that one fault."

Joey went out.

Peter did his best that evening to explain the true position of affairs without imputing snobbery to Mrs. Loveredge. It was a difficult task, and Peter cannot be said to have accomplished it successfully. Anger and indignation against Joey gave place to pity. The members of the Autolycus Club also experienced a little irritation on their own account.

"What does the woman take us for?" demanded Somerville the Briefless. "Doesn't she know that we lunch with real actors and actresses, that once a year we are invited to dine at the Mansion House?"

"Has she never heard of the aristocracy of genius?" demanded Alexander the Poet.

"The explanation may be that possibly she has seen it," feared the Wee Laddie.

"One of us ought to waylay the woman," argued the Babe—"insist upon her talking to him for ten minutes. I've half a mind to do it myself."

Jack Herring said nothing — seemed thoughtful.

The next morning, Jack Herring, still thoughtful, called at the editorial offices of *Good Humour*, in Crane Court, and borrowed Miss Bragshot's "Debrett." Three days later Jack Herring informed the Club casually that he had dined the night before with Mr. and Mrs. Loveredge. The Club gave Jack Herring politely to understand that they regarded him as a liar, and proceeded to demand particulars.

"If I wasn't there," explained Jack Herring with unanswerable logic, "how can I tell you anything about it?"

This annoyed the Club, whose curiosity had been whetted. Three members, acting in the interests of the whole, solemnly undertook to believe whatever he might tell them. But Jack Herring's feelings had been wounded.

"When gentlemen cast a doubt upon another gentleman's veracity——"

"We didn't cast a doubt," explained Somerville the Briefless. "We merely said that we personally did not believe you. We didn't say we couldn't believe you; it is a case for individual effort. If you give us particulars bearing the impress of reality, supported by details that do not unduly contradict each other, we are prepared to put aside our natural suspicions and face the possibility of your statement being correct."

"It was foolish of me," said Jack Herring. "I thought perhaps it would amuse you to hear what sort of a woman Mrs. Loveredge was like—some description of Mrs. Loveredge's uncle. Miss Montgomery, friend of Mrs. Loveredge, is certainly one of the most remarkable women I have ever met. Of course, that isn't her real name. But, as I have said, it was foolish of me. These people—you will never meet them, you will never see them; of what interest can they be to you?"

"They had forgotten to draw down the blinds, and he climbed up a lamp-post and looked through the window," was the solution of the problem put forward by the Wee Laddie.

"I'm dining there again on Saturday," volunteered Jack Herring. "If any of you will promise not to make a disturbance, you can hang about on the Park side, underneath the shadow of the fence, and watch me go in. My hansom will draw up at the door within a few minutes of eight."

The Babe and the Poet agreed to undertake the test.

"You won't mind our hanging round a little while, in case you're thrown out again?" asked the Babe.

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"Not in the least, so far as I am concerned," replied Jack Herring. "Don't leave it too late and make your mother anxious."

"It's true enough," the Babe recounted afterwards. "The door was opened by a manservant, and he went straight in. We walked up and down for half an hour, and unless they put him out the back way, he's telling the truth."

"Did you hear him give his name?" asked Somerville, who was stroking his moustache.

"No, he was too far off for that," explained the Babe. "But I'll swear it was Jack—there couldn't be any mistake about that."

"Perhaps not," agreed Somerville the Briefless.

Somerville the Briefless called at the offices of *Good Humour*, in Crane Court, the following morning, and he also borrowed Miss Bragshot's "Debrett."

"What's the meaning of it?" demanded the sub-editor.

"Meaning of what?"

"This sudden interest of all you fellows in the British peerage."

"All of us?"

"Well, Herring was here last week, poring over that book for half an hour, with the *Morning Post* spread out before him. Now you're doing the same thing."

"Ah! Jack Herring, was he? I thought as much. Don't talk about it, Tommy. I'll tell you later on."

On the following Monday, the Briefless one announced to the Club that he had received an invitation to dine at the Loveredge's on the following Wednesday. On Tuesday, the Briefless one entered the Club with a slow and stately step. Halting opposite old Goslin the porter, who had emerged from his box with the idea of discussing the Oxford and Cambridge boat-race, Somerville, removing his hat with a sweep of the arm, held it out in silence. Old Goslin, much astonished, took it mechanically, whereupon the Briefless one, shaking himself free from his Inverness cape, flung it lightly after the hat, and strolled on, not noticing that old Goslin, unaccustomed to coats lightly and elegantly thrown at him, dropping the hat, had caught it on his head, and had been, in the language of the prompt-book, "left struggling." The Briefless one, entering the smoking-room, lifted a chair and let it fall again with a crash, and sitting down upon it, crossed his legs and rang the bell.

"Ye're doing it verra weel," remarked approvingly the Wee Laddie. "Ye're just fitted for it by nature."

"Fitted for what?" demanded the Briefless one, waking up apparently from a dream.

"For an Adelphi guest, at eighteenpence a night," assured him the Wee Laddie. "Ye're just splendid at it."

The Briefless one, muttering that the worst of mixing with journalists was that if you did not watch yourself, you fell into their ways, drank his whisky in silence. Later, the Babe swore on a copy of "Sell's Advertising Guide" that, crossing the Park, he had seen the Briefless leaning over the railings of Rotten Row, clad in a pair of new kid gloves, swinging a silver-headed cane.

One morning towards the end of the week, Joseph Loveredge, looking twenty years younger than when Peter had last seen him, dropped in at the editorial office of *Good Humour* and demanded of Peter Hope how he felt and what he thought of the weather. Peter Hope expressed his determination not to be surprised should it even turn to rain.

"I want you to dine with us on Sunday," said Joseph Loveredge. "Jack Herring will be there. You might bring Tommy with you."

Peter Hope gulped down his astonishment and said he should be delighted; he thought that Tommy also was disengaged. "Mrs. Loveredge out of town, I presume?" questioned Peter Hope.

"On the contrary," replied Joseph Loveredge, "I want you to meet her."

Joseph Loveredge removed a pile of books from one chair and placed them carefully upon another, after which he went and stood before the fire.

"Don't if you don't like," said Joseph Loveredge; "but if you don't mind, you might call yourself, just for the evening—say, the Duke of Warrington."

"Say the what?" demanded Peter Hope.

"The Duke of Warrington," repeated Joey. "We are rather short of dukes. Tommy can be the Lady Adelaide, your daughter."

"Don't be an ass!" said Peter Hope.

"I'm not an ass," assured him Joseph Loveredge. "He is wintering in Egypt. You have run back for a week to attend to business. There is no Lady Adelaide, so that's quite simple."

"But what in the name of——" began Peter Hope.

"Don't you see what I'm driving at?" persisted Joey. "It was Jack's idea at the

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beginning. I was frightened myself at first, but it is working to perfection. She sees you, and sees that you are a gentleman.

"'Tall and solemn prigs marry little women.'"

When the truth comes out—as, of course, it must later on—the laugh will be against her."

"You think—you think that'll comfort her?" suggested Peter Hope.

"It's the only way, and it is really wonderfully simple. We never mention the aristocracy now—it would be like talking shop. We just enjoy ourselves. You, by the way, I met in connection with the movement for rational dress. You are a bit of a crank, fond of frequenting Bohemian circles.

"I am risking something, I know," continued Joey; "but it's worth it. I couldn't have existed much longer. We go slowly and are very careful. Jack is Lord Mount-Primrose, who has taken up with anti-vaccination and who never goes out into Society. Somerville is Sir Francis Baldwin, the great authority on centipedes. The Wee Laddie is coming next week as Lord Garrick, who married that dancing-girl, Prissy Something, and started a furniture shop in Bond Street. I had some difficulty at first. She wanted to send out paragraphs, but I explained that was only done by vulgar persons—that when the nobility came to you as friends, it was considered bad taste. She is a dear girl, as I have always told you, with only one fault. Anyone easier to deceive one could not wish for. I don't myself see why the truth ever need come out—provided we keep our heads."

"Well, it's your murder," commented

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Peter. "If you are willing to take the chances——"

"That's all right," responded Joey. "Then you'll come? He's about your age—just fifty-six."

"Fifty what?"

"Well, forty-nine is near enough. He is a young-looking man for his years. Eight o'clock, plain evening-dress. If you like to wear a bit of red ribbon in your buttonhole, why, do so. You can get it at Evans', in Covent Garden."

"And Tommy is the Lady——"

"Adelaide. Let her have a taste for literature, then she needn't wear gloves. I know she hates them." Joey turned to go.

"Am I married?" asked Peter.

Joey paused. "I should avoid all reference to your matrimonial affairs if I were you," was Joey's advice. "You didn't come out of that affair too well."

"Oh! as bad as that, was I? You don't think Mrs. Loveredge will object to me?"

"I have asked her that. She's a dear, broad-minded girl. I've promised not to leave you alone with Miss Montgomery, and Willis has had instructions not to let you mix your drinks."

"I'd have liked to have been someone a trifle more respectable," grumbled Peter.

"We rather wanted a duke," explained Joey. "And he was the only one that fitted in all round."

The dinner was a complete success. Tommy, entering into the spirit of the thing, bought a new pair of open-work stockings and assumed a languid drawl. Peter, who was growing forgetful, introduced her as the Lady Alexandra; it did not seem to matter, both beginning with an A. She greeted Lord Mount-Primrose as "Billy," and asked affectionately after his mother. Joey told his raciest stories. The Duke of Warrington called everybody by their Christian names and seemed well acquainted with Bohemian Society—a more amiable nobleman it would have been impossible to discover. The lady whose real name was not Miss Montgomery sat in speechless admiration. The hostess was the personification of gracious devotion.

Other little dinners, equally successful, followed. Joey's acquaintanceship appeared to be confined exclusively to the higher circles of the British aristocracy—with one exception: that of a German baron, a short, stout gentleman, who talked English well, but with an accent, and who, when he desired to be impressive, laid his right forefinger on the right side of his nose and thrust his whole face forward. Mrs. Loveredge wondered why her husband had not introduced them sooner, but was too blissful to be suspicious. The Autolycus Club was gradually changing its tone. Friends could no longer recognise one another by the voice. Every corner had its solitary student practising high-class

"When he desired to be impressive, laid his right forefinger on the right side of his nose."

intonation. Members dropped into the habit of addressing one another as "dear chappie," and, discarding pipes, took to cheap cigars. Many of the older *habitués* resigned.

All might have gone well to the end of time if only Mrs. Loveredge had left all social arrangements in the hands of her husband—had not sought to aid his efforts.

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To a certain political garden-party, one day in the height of the Season, were invited Joseph Loveredge, editor, and Mrs. Joseph Loveredge, his wife. Mr. Joseph Loveredge at the last moment found himself unable to attend. Mrs. Joseph Loveredge went alone, met there various members of the British aristocracy. Mrs. Joseph Loveredge, accustomed to friendship with the aristocracy, felt at her ease and was natural and agreeable. The wife of an eminent peer talked to her and liked her. It occurred to Mrs. Joseph Loveredge that this lady might be induced to visit her house in Regent's Park, there to mingle with those of her own class.

"Lord Mount-Primrose, the Duke of Warrington, and a few others will be dining with us on Sunday next," suggested Mrs. Loveredge. "Will not you do us the honour of coming? We are, of course, only simple folk ourselves, but somehow people seem to like us."

The wife of the eminent peer looked at Mrs. Loveredge, looked round the grounds, looked at Mrs. Loveredge again, and said she would like to come. Mrs. Joseph Loveredge intended at first to tell her husband of her success, but a little devil entering into her head and whispering to her that it would be amusing, she resolved to keep it as a surprise, to be sprung upon him at eight o'clock on Sunday. The surprise proved all she could have hoped for.

The Duke of Warrington, having journalistic matters to discuss with Joseph Loveredge, arrived at half-past seven, wearing on his shirt-front a silver star, purchased in Eagle Street the day before for eight-and-six. There accompanied him the Lady Alexandra, wearing the identical ruby necklace that every night for the past six months, and twice on Saturdays, "John Strongheart" had been falsely accused of stealing. Lord Garrick, having picked up his wife (Miss Bragshot) outside the "Mother Redcap," arrived with her on foot at a quarter to eight. Lord Mount-Primrose, together with Sir Francis Baldwin, dashed up in a hansom at 7.50. His Lordship, having lost the toss, paid the fare. The Hon. Harry Sykes (commonly called "the Babe") was ushered in five minutes later. The noble company assembled in the drawing-room chatted blithely while waiting for dinner to be announced. The Duke of Warrington was telling an anecdote about a cat, which nobody appeared to believe. Lord Mount-Primrose desired to know whether by any chance it might be the same animal that every night at half-past nine had been in the habit of climbing up his Grace's railings and knocking at his Grace's door. The Honourable Harry was saying that, speaking of cats, he once had a yellow dog—when the door was thrown open and Willis announced the Lady Mary Sutton.

Mr. Joseph Loveredge, who was sitting near the fire, rose up. Lord Mount-Primrose, who was standing near the piano, sat down. The Lady Mary Sutton paused in the doorway. Mrs. Loveredge crossed the room to greet her.

"Let me introduce you to my husband," said Mrs. Loveredge. "Joey, my dear, the Lady Mary Sutton. I met the Lady Mary at the O'Meyers' the other day, and she was good enough to accept my invitation. I forgot to tell you."

Mr. Loveredge said he was delighted; after which, although as a rule a chatty man, he seemed to have nothing else to say. And a silence fell.

Somerville the Briefless—till then. That evening has always been reckoned the starting-point of his career. Up till then nobody thought he had much in him—walked up and held out his hand.

"You don't remember me, Lady Mary," said the Briefless one. "I met you some years ago; we had a most interesting conversation—Sir Francis Baldwin."

The Lady Mary stood for a moment trying apparently to recollect. She was a handsome, fresh-complexioned woman of about forty, with frank, agreeable eyes. The Lady Mary glanced at Lord Garrick, who was talking rapidly to Lord Mount-Primrose, who was not listening, and who could not have understood even if he had been, Lord Garrick, without being aware of it, having dropped into broad Scotch. From him the Lady Mary glanced at her hostess, and from her hostess to her host.

The Lady Mary took the hand held out to her. "Of course," said the Lady Mary; "how stupid of me! It was the day of my own wedding, too. You really must forgive me. We talked of quite a lot of things. I remember now."

Mrs. Loveredge, who prided herself upon maintaining old-fashioned courtesies, proceeded to introduce the Lady Mary to her fellow-guests, a little surprised that her Ladyship appeared to know so few of them. Her Ladyship's greeting of the Duke of Warrington was accompanied, it was remarked, by a somewhat curious smile. To the Duke of

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Warrington's daughter alone did the Lady Mary address remark.

"My dear," said the Lady Mary, "how you have grown since last we met!"

The announcement of dinner, as everybody felt, came none too soon.

It was not a merry feast. Joey told but one story; he told it three times, and twice left out the point. Lord Mount-Primrose took sifted sugar with *pâté de foie gras* and ate it with a spoon. Lord Garrick, talking a mixture of Scotch and English, urged his wife to give up housekeeping and take a flat in Gower Street, which, as he pointed out, was central. She could have her meals sent into her and so avoid all trouble. The Lady Alexandra's behaviour appeared to Mrs. Loveredge not altogether well-bred. An eccentric young noblewoman Mrs. Loveredge had always found her, but wished on this occasion that she had been a little less eccentric. Every few minutes the Lady Alexandra buried her face in her serviette, and shook and rocked, emitting stifled sounds, apparently those of acute physical pain. Mrs. Loveredge hoped she was not feeling ill, but the Lady Alexandra appeared incapable of coherent reply. Twice during the meal the Duke of Warrington rose from the table and began wandering round the room; on each occasion, asked what he wanted, had replied meekly that he was merely looking for his snuff-box, and had sat down again. The only person who seemed to enjoy the dinner was the Lady Mary Sutton.

The ladies retired upstairs into the drawing-room. Mrs. Loveredge, breaking a long silence, remarked it as unusual that no sound of merriment reached them from the dining-room. The explanation was that the entire male portion of the party, on being left to themselves, had immediately and in a body crept on tiptoe into Joey's study, which, fortunately, happened to be on the ground floor. Joey, unlocking the book-case, had taken out his "Debrett," but appeared incapable of understanding it. Sir Francis Baldwin had taken it from his unresisting hands; the remaining aristocracy huddled themselves into a corner and waited in silence.

"I think I've got it all clearly," announced Sir Francis Baldwin, after five minutes, which to the others had been an hour. "Yes, I don't think I'm making any mistake. She's the daughter of the Duke of Truro, married in '53 the Duke of Warrington, at St. Peter's, Eaton Square; gave birth in '55 to a daughter, the Lady Grace Alexandra Warberton Sutton, which makes the child just thirteen. In '63, divorced the Duke of Warrington. Lord Mount-Primrose, so far as I can make out, must be her second cousin. I appear to have married her in '66 at Hastings. It doesn't seem to me that we could have got together a homelier little party to meet her even if we had wanted to."

Nobody spoke; nobody had anything particularly worth saying. The door opened, and the Lady Alexandra (otherwise Tommy) entered the room.

"Isn't it time," suggested the Lady Alexandra, "that some of you came upstairs?"

"I was thinking myself," explained Joey, the host, with a grim smile, "it was about time that I went out and drowned myself. The canal is handy."

"Put it off till to-morrow," Tommy advised him. "I have asked her Ladyship to give me a lift home, and she has promised to do so. She is evidently a woman with a sense of humour. Wait till after I have had a talk with her."

Six men, whispering at the same time, were prepared with advice; but Tommy was not taking advice.

"Come upstairs, all of you," insisted Tommy, "and make yourselves agreeable. She's going in a quarter of an hour."

Six silent men, the host leading, the two husbands bringing up the rear, went up the stairs, each with the sensation of being twice his usual weight. Six silent men entered the drawing-room and sat down on chairs. Six silent men tried to think of something interesting to say.

Miss Bragshot—it was that or hysterics, as she afterwards explained—stifling a sob, opened the piano. Miss Bragshot was a poor performer at the best of times, and the only thing she could remember was "Champagne Charlie is my Name," a song then popular in the halls. Five men, when she had finished, begged her to go on. Miss Bragshot, speaking in a shrill falsetto, explained it was the only tune she knew. Four of them begged her to play it again. Miss Bragshot played it a second time with involuntary variations.

The Lady Mary's carriage was announced by the imperturbable Willis. The party, with the exception of the Lady Mary and the hostess, suppressed with difficulty an inclination to burst into a cheer. The Lady Mary thanked Mrs. Loveredge for

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"The remaining aristocracy huddled themselves into a corner and waited in silence."

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a most interesting evening and beckoned Tommy to accompany her. With her disappearance, a wild hilarity, uncanny in its suddenness, took possession of the remaining guests.

A few days later, the Lady Mary's carriage again drew up before the little house in Regent's Park. Mrs. Loveredge, fortunately, was at home. The carriage remained waiting for quite a long time. Mrs. Loveredge, after it was gone, locked herself in her own room. The under-housemaid reported to the kitchen that, passing the door, she had detected sounds indicative of strong emotion.

Through what ordeal Joseph Loveredge passed was never known. For a few weeks the Autolycus Club missed him. Then gradually, as, aided by Time, they have a habit of doing, things righted themselves. Joseph Loveredge received his old friends; his friends received Joseph Loveredge. Mrs. Loveredge, as a hostess, came to have only one failing—a marked coldness of demeanour towards all people with titles, whenever introduced to her.

A DAY-DREAM. FROM THE PICTURE BY A. D. GOLTZ.

Reproduced from the photograph by J. Lowy, Vienna.

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THE ANTI-MICROBE MANIAC.

By Lewis Perry.

Photographs by J. Godfrey Ancell.

HE OSTENTATIOUSLY FLICKS AWAY AN IMAGINARY SPECK OF DUST FROM THE SEAT OF HIS CHAIR.

YOU'VE met him, of course?

Amongst modern tortures, the anti-microbe maniac takes a high place.

He gives himself no peace. He objects to his friends and acquaintances enjoying the comforts of tranquillity. Just as the larky boy in the fable used to cry "Wolf!" *he* calls out "Microbes!" and it upsets him when, in response to his warning shout of "Microbes!" others, less susceptible, say "Rats!"

His sole object in life seems to be to prove as big a nuisance as he can be to the ubiquitous bacilli. He gives the poor brutes an awful time of it. That wouldn't matter so much, perhaps, if he wasn't such a nuisance to everybody he knows. He gives them also an awful time of it. He doesn't know enough to recognise that most people have plenty of trouble and hard work in this world without taking on the systematic massacre of the miserable microbe. *He* likes the peculiar recreation apparently. Anybody else who doesn't is, in his opinion, almost a criminal of the worst type.

HE NEVER USES HIS BARE HAND TO TURN A HANDLE OF A DOOR. HE USES THE TAIL OF HIS COAT FOR THE PURPOSE.

In his campaign he spares nobody's feelings. Invite him to lunch with you. Before he takes a seat at your table, he ostentatiously flicks away with his handkerchief an imaginary speck of dust from the seat of his chair.

HE PEERS CAREFULLY AT HIS FORK WHEN OUT AT LUNCH, AND MAKES SURE OF ITS ENTIRE CLEANLINESS.

"Where there's dust, there are microbes!" he announces darkly to the assembled company as he performs the flicking operation. "Never trust a housemaid," he adds, with the air of a sage.

His next move is to pick up your spotless knives and forks and, after first peering suspiciously at them, to rub them fiercely with the table-napkin.

"I once knew a man who contracted typhoid through eating with a fork that he had omitted to inspect, at a West End restaurant!" he remarks. "Typhoid germs are extremely difficult to destroy."

Then he talks microbes throughout the courses. So it is hardly any wonder that he is not in great demand as a sociable and companionable guest.

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He has spent years of his life in inventing dodges and laying down rules whereby he may discomfit the onslaught of his mortal enemies.

HE INSISTS ON CHANGE BEING PLACED IN A SCOOP WHICH HE CARRIES. THE CHANGE IS NEVER TOUCHED BY HIS HANDS UNTIL IT HAS GONE THROUGH A BOILING PROCESS.

For instance, whenever he needs to enter or leave a room, he cannot grasp the handle of the door in the usual way. Not he. Microbes might be loitering about on the polished knobs. So he takes his coat-tail in his hand and carefully places it over the handle, which he then turns.

On one occasion a scoffer suggested that if there did happen to be a lonely microbe meandering about the door-handle, the very cautious man, by acting as he did, transferred the organism to his coat-tails, where it was in a position to inflict grievous bodily harm whenever it had the inclination to do so.

The destroyer of microbes regarded the Philistine with a pitying eye.

"My friend," he said slowly and impressively, "any organism that could exist upon my coat-tail for a longer period than five seconds is welcome to inflict any harm it can. I am not such a fool as to go about with my coat-tails unprotected. My clothes are treated every morning to a thorough sprinkling of Rotall's germ-destroyer, absolutely guaranteed to kill bacilli practically at sight.

WHEN TRAVELLING BY TRAIN, HE FORMS A PROTECTIVE COVERING WITH A NEWSPAPER.

Another precaution invariably taken by this extraordinary individual is quite characteristic. He never takes money from any person in his hand. He has provided himself with a sort of scoop which he produces from a special pocket as necessity arises. All money must be placed in this utensil by the person who is handing it over. And before the anti-microbe man touches it with a finger, all coins received must be boiled in water at 240 degrees Fahr. Words fail to describe the feelings of cabdrivers and omnibus-conductors under whose nose he thrusts his scoop to receive any change due. It is well that language gives relief to the feelings, otherwise apoplexy or something worse would happen to the indignant recipients of the outrageous insult.

HIS SAFETY-VEIL FOR USE IN WINDY, DUSTY WEATHER. THIS PREVENTS HIM INHALING MILLIONS OF DANGEROUS MICROBES.

"But that doesn't matter, after all," is the A.M.M.'s comment. "Their abuse won't hurt me. Their change would—if I did not take a little more care than other people. The risks men and women run every day of their lives, by taking change from strangers, are almost too terrible to realise. More disease is spread by means of odd coppers and small silver than I care to suggest. That's why I boil my change before it touches my hands. I just shovel it into one of my germ-proof pockets until I get home, when, pop! it goes into the boiler."

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When he travels by train, whether for a short or long journey, he literally buries himself in the pages of a newspaper. Before he takes his seat, he invests in a copy of the biggest periodical he can obtain for a penny. This he opens and wraps around him so effectually that generally the only portion of his body visible is his nose. He declares that, newspapers being germ-proof, he is as safe from microbic attack as though he wore a suit of steel armour.

"Compartments of railway carriages swarm with murderous bacilli. A man never enters one but he risks his life. For my part, I consider I am only doing my duty to myself to protect myself as best I can. The newspaper dodge was recommended to me by a specialist in modern diseases."

HE WILL NOT STEP ON OR ACROSS A DOORMAT UNTIL HE HAS FIRST TREATED IT WITH A DISINFECTANT.

WHEN SPEAKING WITH STRANGERS, HE PRESSES A BULB SENDING FORTH A FINE SPRAY OF A DISINFECTANT WHICH FORMS A KIND OF VEIL BETWEEN HIM AND THE OTHER PERSON.

When he goes forth in windy, dusty weather, he never fails to don a veil of several folds. This he places over his mouth and nostrils. His object is to avoid inhaling the most dangerous elements of road-dust, which, as all scientists make a point of declaring, contains millions of microbes, capable of destroying life to an awful extent. He cannot for the life of him understand why other people do not adopt similar means of protection from the terrible diseases which lurk on the surface of the public roads, ready to be whirled up into people's faces with the first breeze that comes along.

Should he at any time have to speak with a stranger in the street or in a public building, he has prepared himself against the risk of infection in quite a novel way. Here is an invention of his own, which he is at present trying to put on the market.

In the inside pocket of his coat he carries a flask of strong liquid of a disinfecting nature. On pressing a bulb which he carries in another pocket, a fine spray of the fluid is forced from a little contrivance, very like a baby's "comforter," carried in his button-hole. The spray forms a kind of watery curtain between him and the person who speaks to him. Through this curtain no microbe can pass without meeting with instant annihilation. What the other man thinks of the contrivance is another matter.

The anti-microbe maniac never passes over a doormat until he has made sure that it is safe to do so. This is how he makes sure: He carries about with him at all times a large bottle of the strongest antiseptic liquid he can buy. Before he enters a house, he drops down on one knee,

HE IS ALWAYS IN FEAR OF DEADLY MICROBES BEING CARRIED INTO THE HOUSE ON HIS WALKING-STICK. THIS SHOWS HOW HE DISINFECTS IT. THE TUBULAR STAND CONTAINS A DISINFECTANT.

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whips out his bottle of germ-killer, and sprays the entire surface of the mat, sometimes going so far as to turn up the other side and treat it similarly! Indignant owners rather resent this sort of thing; but they are soon soothed, as the microbe maniac is eloquent enough to persuade them that what he has done has saved their lives!

One of his pet theories is that a walking-stick may be the means of importing death into a house. A walking-stick finds its way into strange holes and corners. When placed in an ordinary hall-stand, it may become covered with bacilli from other articles beside it. He is determined that he will not be one of the walking-stick victims of disease. In his hall is a stand with a tubular metal case. This contains a disinfecting fluid, which possesses the quality of not injuring the walking-stick whilst proving deadly to the dreaded microbe.

When he enters his hall, the first thing he does is to place his stick in its tubular receptacle, and the feat of cleaning is complete.

HE NEVER STARTS READING A BOOK BEFORE HE HAS FUMIGATED ITS PAGES.

So cautious is he in other respects that he never starts reading a book without first taking the trouble to fumigate its pages. His vehemently expressed opinion is that the public or distributing library is responsible for many mysterious outbreaks of epidemics in a town. One volume may have killed its hundreds. In this reading age one may feel a bit uncomfortable about reading anything.

BEFORE DRINKING ANY BEVERAGE, HE RUNS THE FLAME OF A LIGHTED MATCH AROUND THE EDGE OF THE VESSEL, TO DESTROY ANY POSSIBLE MICROBES.

A further peculiarity of the man is that he will not drink a glass of wine at his club without first passing the flame of a lighted match around the edge of the vessel containing the liquid refreshment. This, he explains, is one of the surest ways of destroying any microbes that may be perambulating around the margin of the glass.

When the postman arrives at his house, he insists on the letters being placed in a patent fumigating-box, and until his correspondence has passed half an hour in this receptacle, he will not open a single envelope!

HIS LETTERS ARE ALWAYS PLACED BY THE POSTMAN IN A SPECIAL FUMIGATING-BOX.

He still goes on in his offensive tactics against the unfortunate microbe. Only the other day at his club he introduced a new thing in the shape of a patent germ-exterminator. It was something in a bottle. In drawing the cork he accidentally splashed a few tiny drops over the clothes of a few men who sat near him. The result was that these men went home in a moth-eaten condition, so strong was the stuff. How it affected microbes may be conjectured.

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A STUDY.

By A. Popini.

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THE GARDEN OF LIES.

By JUSTUS MILES FORMAN,*

Author of "Journeys End," "Cupid's House Party," etc.

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—Denis Mallory, a reckless but chivalrous young Irishman, living in Paris, is suddenly involved in a strange chain of circumstance through having, quite light-heartedly, undertaken to impersonate the reigning Prince of Novodnia, at the request of the doctor who is treating the young Princess for loss of memory. The Prince has but lately come to the throne of Novodnia, as the result of an extraordinary series of deaths. So improbable has his succession previously been considered that he has been allowed to marry outside royal circles, and is now the husband of an American girl of great beauty and considerable wealth. On his accession to the throne, the Prince's supporters in his faction-ridden kingdom become anxious about the succession. His wife not being of royal rank, no child of hers could succeed to the throne. The Prince, however, resolutely refuses to divorce the Princess Eleanor, and one result of his loyalty to her is that while he is obliged to remain in Novodnia to meet and combat intrigue and faction of various kinds, his beautiful wife is living in Paris under the care of the great brain-specialist, Sir Gavin MacKenzie. The marriage of the Prince with Eleanor took place in America, and it was on the way from the church that a carriage accident caused the injuries which kept the Princess still in a state of unconsciousness when, a fortnight later, the Prince was called home to Novodnia to ascend the throne. The Princess has now recovered her bodily health, but without regaining any memory of recent events, even her own marriage being unknown to her. On learning of her marriage, the Princess demands to see her husband, and imagines a conspiracy to keep him from her. Indeed, she inquires for him so persistently that the doctors fear for her reason unless he comes to her. This, of course, is impossible, and the position is so critical that it is decided by Colonel Von Altdorf, Chancellor of Carlo III., Creighton, who tells the story, and Sir Gavin MacKenzie, to introduce Denis Mallory to Eleanor as her husband; and just as the young couple are really falling in love with one another, news arrives that the Prince is on his way to Paris to claim his wife. Prince Karl loves his wife so dearly that though he is told of the deception that has been practised in order to preserve his wife's reason, he is overcome with jealousy on seeing Mallory and Eleanor together in the garden. He creates a violent scene, which leads to a duel between himself and Denis. Both are good swordsmen, but Denis Mallory eventually disarms the Prince, who falls fainting, but unwounded, to the ground. When Prince Karl regains consciousness, he is thoroughly aware of the misunderstanding into which he has fallen, and immediately apologises. Sir Gavin MacKenzie and the others, however, try to persuade him to return at once to Novodnia to make safe his crown, which is threatened by Georgias, the pretender to the throne. The Prince firmly refuses to leave Paris without his wife. He is, however, prevailed upon to promise that he will not insist upon an interview with the Princess, as the shock of the deception which has necessarily been practised upon her would probably prove too great, and upset the good work done towards her complete recovery. For a short time matters go smoothly; but acting on a sudden impulse, the Prince gains an audience with his wife, who becomes greatly incensed against Denis Mallory, but otherwise bears the blow with fortitude. Sir Gavin denounces the Prince as a blunderer, and ultimately refuses to have anything more to do with the affair.

CHAPTER XIII.

AND this is how the thing that had set all our plans at naught came about. Miss Jessica Mannering was in the great, gloomy, stone-arched chamber which had been made into a reception and music room. She had been arranging some jonquils—a great, yellow cluster of them—in a bronze jar upon the piano, and was sitting before that instrument idly touching the keys. Her fingers strayed unwittingly into a certain quaint old song, a madrigal of Lodge's, "Love in my Bosom, like a Bee," which seemed to rouse in her pleasant reflections, for she smiled softly as she played, and a little flush rose to her cheeks.

Then the maid, Fifine, appeared, saying that a gentleman wished to see Mademoiselle. The little flush deepened a bit. She knew who the "gentleman" was.

"Colonel von Altdorf is always to come in at once, Fifine!" said she. "You need never ask."

But the man who entered the room immediately bore no likeness to Colonel von Altdorf. She had known this man many months before in New York and in Newport.

"Prince Karl!" gasped Miss Mannering. "Prince—Karl? Oh, sir, sir, you ought not to come here! Does Colonel von Altdorf know? Oh, you mustn't stay! What if Eleanor should see you?" She had fallen back against the piano in her amazement, and she clasped her hands excitedly before her as if she would pray him to be gone. "You must not be seen here, Prince," she repeated. "Ah, you should not have come!"

"I have come, mademoiselle," cried the Prince, "to see my wife! Heavens! am I to be put off for ever? Von Altdorf! Enough of Von Altdorf! Is he my governor, my keeper? I tell you, mademoiselle, I can

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bear it no longer. Has a husband no rights? Am I to stand by idle while another man plays my part, wins my wife from me for ever? Let me see her! Mademoiselle, you are a woman; you are not as those men, MacKenzie, Von Altdorf, Creighton—cold, careful, without heart! Let me see her. By Heaven, I demand it! Who, I ask you, is Prince of Novodnia and husband of the Princess Eleanor? Is it that gentleman whom she meets in the garden daily, or is it I?"

"Oh, Prince, Prince!" begged Miss Mannering, "pray be calm! Heaven knows how we all regret the deception we have had to practise. It has been through no desire of ours that you were kept away from Eleanor. Will you not be wise and go quickly before she may happen in here? She is not yet fit to see you. It must be broken to her gently."

"Mademoiselle!" he cried, "I will be put off no longer! I cannot allow this deception to go on. I demand an interview with my wife, the Princess. No man with—— Great Heavens! Eleanor! Eleanor!"

Miss Mannering saw his face go suddenly white and his jaw drop as his voice left him in a choking gasp, and she turned about with a little shriek.

The Princess Eleanor came forward slowly from the doorway where she had been standing. She looked from her cousin to the man who stood near, and back again to Miss Mannering, with a puzzled, questioning expression. She was frowning slightly and her eyes were clouded.

"What—what do you mean by a—deception going on—*your* wife, the Princess Eleanor—meeting another man daily in the garden?" she said in a slow, wondering tone. "What is all this about? Jessica, who is this——? Ah!" She caught herself up sharply as she saw the Prince's face full in the light, and moved a little away from him, putting out her hand to Miss Mannering.

"Why, this is—the man who—who frightened me the other day in the garden," she said, still in her low, puzzled tone. "What does he—want, Jess? Does he want to see the Prince? Oh, Jessica, Jessica! what is it all about? What is this dreadful mystery? Why, Jess, you're trembling! I've heard all you've said to each other—what does he mean by saying that he's the Prince? Why, he's not the Prince at all! Why did you call him Prince, Jess? Why didn't you want me to see him? I—oh, tell me what it's all about!"

Miss Jessica Mannering flashed a desperate warning to the Prince and took her cousin by the shoulders. "It's nothing, nothing, dear!" she cried. "Come away! You mustn't be excited over trifles. This is another Prince from—somewhere near Novodnia. He wants to see Prince Karl upon—business of State. Come away, Eleanor, come!"

But the Princess Eleanor would not be moved. She freed herself from the arm that Miss Mannering had thrown around her and shook her head decidedly. Her eyes did not leave the man's face.

"Don't try to hoodwink me, Jess," said she. "There's some mystery here, and I must know of it—— Where have I seen this gentleman before? His face—why, his face is oddly familiar!" She pressed her hand over her eyes a moment as if she would clear away the mist from her mind.

"Who are you, sir?" she asked. "I seem to know you, but—I—my memory plays me false."

The Prince looked at Miss Jessica Mannering and made a little gesture of desperation.

"Madame!" said he, "I am Carol Ferdinand, Prince of Novodnia. Ah, Eleanor, Eleanor! don't you know me?"

The Princess Eleanor caught her hand swiftly to her breast and stared into the man's face. Her eyes were dilated very wide and dark, and her lips parted. She seemed not to breathe at all. After some little time she turned her head, not moving her body, and her wide eyes burned into those of her cousin. Miss Mannering dropped her face into her hands and fell to sobbing, and the Princess looked again towards the man.

"You?" she said in a slow half-whisper. "*You* Prince of Novodnia and my husband? Why—why, I must have misunderstood—I must be dream—— Ah! if this is a jest, sir, I tell you it is a poor one! I don't follow your humour. Yet your—your face? Oh! in Heaven's name, can't you explain? Jess, Jess, tell me! What does it all mean?" Her voice had risen to a cry. "This man Prince of Novodnia? Why, then, what is *my* Prince? This man my hus—— Why, Jessica, I've been with my husband for a fortnight, every day! Am I mad, or are you? Jess, what does it all mean?"

Miss Mannering drew her cousin into her arms and bent the dazed, trembling head till it lay upon her shoulder.

"Listen, dearest!" said she. "I must tell you the truth now, the whole truth, at any cost, though we had meant to break it to you gently. This gentleman *is* Prince Karl of Novodnia—— No, no! Wait, Eleanor! He

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was detained in Novodnia by the troubles there, and could not by any chance get away to come to you here in Paris. But you were on the edge of—of nervous prostration, dear—or worse. You imagined that we were trying to keep your husband from you—— Ah! you imagined all sorts of things, till we were quite desperate, Sir Gavin and the rest of us. So someone suggested that—that another gentleman take the Prince's place—since the Prince might not come; and a Mr. Mallory, Denis Mallory—wait, wait, Eleanor!—pretended to be the Prince, your husband, to save your reason, and perhaps your life. Oh, it is he, Eleanor, whom you have been seeing every day! The real Prince came unexpectedly that day when you first saw him, when he frightened you in the garden."

The Princess Eleanor moved slowly away from her cousin and stood looking at her with sombre eyes.

"It—isn't—true," she said very low, and as if to herself, but there was no conviction in the tone. "It—isn't true. Why, of course, it can't be true. *My* Karl not the Prince, not my husband? My Karl? Jess, dear, please tell me that you're joking, or I dreaming, or that I'm quite, quite mad! Carlo's not Carlo at all, but a Mr. Mallory? This—this gentleman is Carlo, my husband? Oh, Jessica, don't let me believe you! Take hold of me a—moment, dear; things are—going round—just a bit."

"Eleanor!" said the Prince. "Ah, Eleanor, Eleanor!"

She covered her face with shaking hands and swayed in Miss Mannering's arms.

"I tell you I *won't* believe it!" she cried fiercely. Her voice had gone quite beyond control and was hoarse and unnatural. "I won't, I won't? *My* Karl play a trick like that? Why, it isn't in him! He couldn't do it! He is the very soul of all honour! Do you want me to believe him a blackguard—*him?* Why, Jess, Jess, there's some dreadful mistake somewhere; I know there is. I'd trust him against all the world—sooner than my own self, I tell you. No, oh, no! he'd never lie to me!"

"Dearest!" cried Jessica Mannering, "don't you understand that it was to save you? We feared for your very reason, Eleanor—for your life! It was only something desperate that would save you. Ah, dear, dear! do you think I'd be telling you this, making you suffer so, if it weren't true? Can't you see that we had to lie to you for your own sake?"

The Princess moved away from her again and leaned against the wall near by, laying her head upon the rough hangings. She shivered as if she were cold and pulled the collar of her dress closer about her throat.

"Lie to me?" she said. "Oh, yes, yes, it might be necessary to lie to me, sometimes, for my own good—— Oh, yes, I can see that. But give me a man that you call my husband, let me see him every day, grow to know him, care for him, love him as no human being ever was loved before; centre my whole life, my world, my heaven to come in the depths of his eyes, in the smile of his lips? Oh, it's infamous! It's unbelievable! Is a woman's sanity—nay, her life itself—more than her soul? I tell you that man, who you say is not my husband, has the very soul of me between his hands! I've grown to love him till I'm part of him, and he of me; my soul can never be my own again, any more than my heart can. It's infamous, I say! That's what you've done for me, all of you! That's what you've robbed me of—my immortal soul! And for my health's sake! Oh-h! And—and now you bring this man here and say that he's my husband! You expect me to say to him: 'Oh, yes, yes, it's been nice with your substitute, but now that you've come, I'll go away with you when you will.' 'I?' There isn't any I! I'm part of that man whom I've grown to love! And now you ask me to believe him a blackguard?" She turned her face against the wall and hid it with her hands. "A blackguard!" she moaned. "My king a blackguard! 'I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honour more'—'loved I not honour more!' Carlo, Carlo!"

She stood so, face to the wall, for a long time, silent and, save for an occasional fit of trembling, motionless, while the other two looked into each other's eyes with a dumb despair.

When at last she turned to them again, she was quite calm, though now and then, as she spoke, her lips quivered and she was forced to pause an instant to steady her voice.

"It would seem, sir," said she, not lifting her eyes to his face, "that you are my husband—if, indeed, we have come at last to the truth in this tragedy of errors. Had I heart or brain left with feeling, I think I should be sorry for you, for it appears that I have never brought you anything but grief and anxiety. I—I cannot speak now of our relations. You—must give me time to think. My world, sir, has been cut from

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"'Why, his face is oddly familiar!'"

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under my feet. The one I loved and trusted and—worshipped most of all living beings has proved a blackguard, and it is not strange that I am left without bearings or standards. I have no love left to give you, Prince. I have no love left in me, nor trust, nor faith. I care not at all what becomes of me, for all that made my life is wrecked and dead utterly. May I beg you to leave me for to-day? I will see you, if you wish, later, to—to speak of the—future. Oh, leave us quickly, sir; I can't bear—I——" Her voice broke into great, shaking sobs, and she sank down into one of the big chairs that stood near, and hid her face again.

The Prince of Novodnia glanced at Miss Jessica Mannering and, taking up his hat, tip-toed softly out of the room.

Miss Mannering dropped upon her knees beside the chair and threw her two arms about the huddled figure, laying her face against the bronzed head and sobbing; but the Princess Eleanor put her away and rose to her feet, choking down the great sobs that shook her, with a fierce effort.

"Don't touch me, please," she said in a half-whisper. "I—I don't seem to want anyone to—to touch me or be near me. I want to be alone—quite alone. You've quite wrecked my life—among you, and I presume I shall never—forgive you for it. No, I don't think I hate you, quite. But I don't love you any more." She moved uncertainly towards the door that led to the great staircase. In the doorway she paused an instant and looked back.

"Please never mention that—that impostor to me—again," said the Princess Eleanor, and went slowly up the stairs to her chamber.

Miss Jessica Mannering, on her knees by the big chair, dropped her face upon her arms and wept till the tears would no longer flow.

CHAPTER XIV.

"EH?" said Denis wearily, "what's ahead? Heaven knows, not I! Von Altdorf has been laying siege to the Prince again—Gad! if I were the Prince, I'd kill Von Altdorf—and he has promised to go back to Novodnia as soon as he has had another talk with—with Her, so that he'll know where he stands and what the outcome is to be."

We were sitting together in the studio—it was two days after the Princess had been told the truth—Denis at the table, with his elbows upon it and his head in his hands; and I in the long steamer-chair, smoking a pipe and trying to beguile Denis with wonder-inspiring rings of smoke.

"But what's the outcome to be?" I demanded. Denis shook his head.

"Again, Heaven knows," said he—"and won't tell; but I think she will in time go to the Prince—indeed, I'm certain of it. He's her husband, and she has—an exalted sense of—of honour and duty. Ah, yes! she'll go to him—if not for love, still for duty. They'll find some way to make her elevation possible, to make it popular among the people, and she'll fill her high position as a princess should. Aye, a throne will become her. She was born for State. Have you—happened to hear anything about her since day before yesterday, Ted? Have you been at the house?"

"Why, no," said I. "I meant to have gone there yesterday, but something else came up. I'll run over now. Miss Mannering will be there, of course. Will you come?"

He looked up eagerly for an instant. I knew how he was longing to go, to see Miss Mannering himself, ask her all the things that he might not ask of anyone else, hear the littlest details of that lamentable scene with the Prince. But he shook his head.

"No, Ted, no," said he; "I mustn't go. It wouldn't do at all. She might see me there, happen into the room while we were calling. Ah, no; you must go alone, lad. But—ask a great deal about her, Teddy. Find out just how she is—if it has weakened her at all, if she's ill, how she seems and looks. Ah, remember, Ted, that I want to know everything! Nothing's too little or too trivial. Bah! I'm growing womanish! Don't mind me, lad; just make your call and—and ask all the questions you can. I shall be waiting here for you."

"I'll do my best, old chap," said I. "Miss Mannering shan't get off easily, I promise you. Wait here; I shall not be long."

I found Miss Jessica Mannering in the music-room. She was sitting in one of the big, stuffed chairs near a window, with a book, and looked up with a trace of eagerness as I came in. I wasn't at all cut up when the trace of eagerness died away at sight of me, for I had no hopes of rivalling Von Altdorf.

"I've come to inquire about the Princess," said I. "Den — we're all tremendously worried, of course, and, if you don't mind my saying it, you look worried, too."

Indeed, I had never seen Miss Mannering in quite this guise. Her eyes were indisputably red from weeping. She was very pale

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and drawn, and seemed on the verge of illness.

She laid her head back restlessly upon the cushions of the big chair and sighed.

"Worried?" said she, "worried? I'm half mad, and quite ill from anxiety and lack of sleep. Eleanor will hardly speak to me or to Sir Gavin, or to Colonel von Altdorf, who was here yesterday. I don't know what to do or say, Mr. Creighton. If only she'd a mother! You see, I am the only one of the family here in Paris, for my uncle, Eleanor's father, was called back to America long ago. I'm quite at my wits' end."

"She's not ill again?" I asked—"er—mentally or otherwise? It hasn't forced her into a relapse?"

"Oh, no, I think not," said the girl. "She seems strong enough. Sir Gavin says that it's her anger and resentment that are keeping her up, for she's terribly angry in her proud, cold way. Indeed, one can't blame her for it, nor for turning against us all as she has done. She feels that an almost unspeakable humiliation has been put upon her in presenting Mr. Mallory as her husband and allowing her to fall so madly in love with him. Ah, she did love him, Mr. Creighton! I suppose none of us will ever know how she loved him. Now, she won't allow his name to be mentioned before her—as if we'd any chance! We seldom see her. She keeps to her own rooms, has her meals sent there—indeed, save that yesterday she came down for dinner. Poor Eleanor! She's had so much more than her share of suffering, hasn't she? It seems as if Fate—as Colonel von Altdorf would say—had chosen her for misfortune. I suppose there is no more terrible thing than to have the one person whom, out of all the world, you love most proved all at once an impostor and, as it must seem to you, a villain. She says that her world is cut from under her feet, that there's no love nor trust nor faith left in her. She says she will never forgive us all, and I dare say it is true. Her whole mind has been turned into the bitterest resentment."

"Alas!" said I, "Von Altdorf's right. Fate plays—and makes sorry figures of us all. What's to be done but wait?"

And Miss Mannering dropped her hands listlessly into her lap and answered as Denis had answered half-an-hour before—

"Heaven knows!"

There was a stir of draperies upon the stairs and outside the door that led into the long hall, and the Princess Eleanor of Novodnia entered.

"I am looking for my Browning," she said from the doorway. "Have you it, Jessi——" She saw me and paused a moment.

"Ah, Mr.—Creighton!" said she, "I—I did not know you were here."

"I trust I don't intrude, madame," said I, bowing.

"Why, not at all," said the Princess. "Miss Mannering will tell you that you are always welcome, sir."

She took up her book from the table and left the room with a little inclination of her head.

I find, now that I come to write it, that I can give no adequate description of the strange alteration which had taken place in her, of the cold, proud aloofness, the regal majesty that seemed to hold her at some great, inexplicable distance. She seemed to have gained in stature, to tower above us, lofty and alien in her bitterness and proud grief. As Miss Mannering had said, she had suffered little physical ill. She appeared strong and well, save that the circles had come about her eyes once more and that her lovely mouth drooped at the corners. Her voice was low and quite civil, but infinitely cold.

"You see, you see!" cried Miss Mannering, when the Princess had left. "Do you wonder that no one can approach her? How—how does she seem to you, Mr. Creighton?"

But I shook my head.

"Don't ask me," I said. "A queen, nursing a pain too great for words, but holding a calm face to the world, if you like. I don't know. Great Heaven! her eyes are the saddest tragedy I ever saw! How she's suffering! And how she must have loved him!"

I rose, still shaking my head.

"I must be going back to Denis," I said. He's waiting for news of her. Yes, Von Altdorf's right—Fate plays."

Once back in the studio, I told Denis all that I had heard and seen, proud that I had so much to give him. He made no comment or remark save an occasional "Yes, yes, man! get on! get on!" when I paused for breath. And when I told him how the Princess had suddenly come into the room where Miss Mannering and I sat talking, he gave a deep-voiced "Ah-h-h!" and dragged his chair nearer.

"But, lad, lad!" he cried, when I had made an end, "dear lad, you tell so little! Nothing that I didn't know before. All

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these things one could take for granted. Tell me the little things, Teddy—how she bore her eyes, and that queen's head of hers. Ah, high in the air, I'll warrant! And was she paler than her wont, lad? And was one little curling lock of her hair loose over the ear—the left ear, as it always is? Had she a flower at her breast? Ah, you have no eyes, Ted! I'd have known every tiniest thing about her in an instant!"

He rose and went over to the window that gives upon the garden. It was open wide for the sweet spring air to enter, and he stood by it staring out into his lost Paradise for a long time.

"I'll walk in the garden for a while," said he at last. "No one will be there to see me or interrupt. I want to sniff the perfume once more and—sit on the stone bench." He threw a foot over the window-ledge and vaulted down to the turf below.

I took up a pipe and a book to pass the time, but Denis walked up the old gravel path between the straight, prim rows of chestnut-trees; and the heavy fragrance of the blossoms above hung over him like the scent of burial flowers.

He walked, head down, eyes fixed upon the ground before him, hands clasped behind his back, so that he came slowly into the little circle of shrubbery that surrounds the fountain, and where stands the cracked old stone bench, without glancing ahead.

Then he raised his eyes and fell a step backward.

"I—beg your—pardon!" said he very low, and in a queer, breathless voice. "I didn't—know there was anyone—here. I—thought I should be alone."

"And I," said the Princess Eleanor from the old stone bench; "else I should not have come."

"I'll go away at once," said Mallory, not looking at her. "I—won't intrude upon you."

"Just a moment, please!" begged the Princess Eleanor. She rose to her feet to confront him, frowning a little, eyes half closed, her lips with the slightest additional curl, as if he were something offensive, unpleasant to see.

"I do not know, sir," she began coldly, "what has been told you relative to—to what occurred on the day before yesterday, or to my sentiments towards you at present—and for all time in the future."

She spoke as if in question and paused a moment.

"I think I have—heard it all." said Denis quietly, "or, at least, quite enough to understand—quite. Of course, I'm not surprised," he went on, "at your feeling about it at all. I—expected to be—despised, and—all that; for you can't know, probably never will know, how desperately necessary it was to take some immediate action, and how we were forced to lie to you, to impose upon you, for your own sake. Ah, I'm not crying for your mercy; I'm not even trying to apologise for what we did. However we hated the task, we knew it was the only thing, and we'd do it again, I think, if the same problem were offered us."

"I can understand, sir," said the Princess, "how Sir Gavin MacKenzie and these other gentlemen—even my cousin Jessica—might use a deception to save my—health. There is nothing terrible in that. But that you should carry the thing on, day after day, seeing, as you must have seen, what it was coming to—seeing that I must grow to care for you, letting me care more and more—aye, making me care! till you had me, heart and soul, in your hands. Ah, there's where the awfulness of the thing lies! To think that a man could be so base, so contemptible, so infamous!

"To think that I could have loved such a—such a thing! Ah-h! I could tear the heart from me and stamp upon it, when I think of these past weeks! It's unclean, vile! I had not supposed that any human being, anything made in God's image, could crawl so low, could do such a hideous thing as to mask himself in smooth, fine words, to prate of his honour—*honour*, by Heaven!—to palm himself off upon an unsuspicious woman as her husband, win the greatest, purest love that was ever in the world, and then go back when his day's work was done, back to his—den, and laugh, laugh and sneer at what he'd done! Ah! fine sport it must have been for you! Royal times you must have had, those evenings, gloating over what you'd won!

"I only wonder that God, whom we're taught is all-wise, suffers such things as you to wander about the earth, poisoning whomever you touch! Do you think I shall ever be clean from you? Do you think I shall ever pass a day without shuddering to think that I've sat here with you, poured out my heart and soul to you as I've never done to another being, kissed you? Oh-h! you've made the remainder of my life hideous. I only wish I might die here and now, before I live to hate myself the more!"

Mallory raised a white and quivering face. His voice shook when he spoke.

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"The Princess saw his face and looked away."

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"And you—you thought—you think that I was—playing the lover as well as the husband? You thought that I went back to my rooms daily to laugh and sneer? Eleanor, you sear my very soul! You—ah! As God lives and loves His world, I've loved you, and love you now, and must love you till I die with all the heart and soul and body that is mine. If ever I have tried to stammer my love in poor words, I could have beaten my tongue for its pitiful halting, stopped my breath for its wretched effort. Words have gone so limping behind my love that they have shamed it, belittled it. Ah! despise me as you will—as you must, Princess; but you cannot kill my love for you. You've called me the lowest of crawling things. You've said that my presence soiled you, left you unclean—— Oh, madame, I am not your husband, and I've no right to any kind word, any good-will from you; but no love so great as mine has ever soiled any woman, and no such worship has ever degraded her."

"Would you carry your infamy further, sir?" she cried. "Have you not done? Would you insult me again with your pretence of love? 'Love!' As if you knew what that word means!"

"I tell you the truth, madame," said Denis Mallory patiently. "I would not have you, for your own sake, believe me worse than I am. I ask nothing of you—not forgiveness, not pity. I've wronged you past all that—though I did it, as did we all, for what I believed to be a good end. But lie to you in the matter of love I did not, nor could have done so had I wished. Can you not see that I must be telling you the truth? that I should gain nothing by lying to you now?"

The Princess shook her head and turned impatiently away from him.

"I can see nothing," said she, "believe nothing, trust nothing, put faith in no human being again. You see what you have done for me with your 'love.'"

"Yes," said he very low. "Yes, I see. My only hope is that time and reflection may, in part at least, undo it. Time is the greatest of healers, madame, the kindest and most merciful of friends."

"And Time, sir," said the Princess coldly, "the greatest of healers, will, no doubt quickly efface all traces of this wonderful love you so stubbornly profess."

But Denis looked at her wide-eyed.

"Time efface my love, madame?" he asked in a wondering tone. "Time efface my love? Why—why—how little you know of love, after all, Princess! Shall love die for lack of feeding, like a neglected child? Shall love live only when it's loved? Time efface it? Eternity won't efface it, madame."

"Nor brave words prove an honest man, sir," said she, "as I've reason enough to know!"

"Why did you come out in the garden to-day, madame?" he demanded suddenly, looking into her eyes. "Why did you come to sit upon the old stone bench?"

The Princess flushed from neck to burnished hair.

"Why—why, I—came because the day was fine, sir," she murmured—"because the house tired me. I came—— What is it to you, sir, why I sit in my garden? How dare you demand my reasons for doing as I please? Your insolence is in keeping with your other—qualities!"

"As you like, madame," said he, bowing. "And now, before I go, will you let me make an appeal to you? No, but wait. The appeal is not for myself; I ask for nothing—nothing! I beg only that you permit that greatest of healers, Time, of which we spoke, to teach you that there are good and true men still in the world, and that not everyone is a—liar and blackguard! Madame, Prince Karl of Novodnia is an honest gentleman, who loves you well—nay, too well—for he has left his realm in direst peril to come to you—alas, too late! I beg that when you have a little recovered from this—this shock, you will listen to him. It is evident that at one time you were willing to give your life to him, even if no great measure of love. Listen to him, Princess, and take the high place in Novodnia that waits for you. You, who are a queen among women, must be a princess before the world. There will never have been so regal or so kind a princess!"

The Princess Eleanor looked at him, still frowning under puzzled brows, as if she could not make him out.

"Has Prince Karl sent you to make this plea?" she asked. "Is this part of your task? You perform it but ill, sir. To profess a great and lasting love for me one moment, and urge me towards another man the next, is but poor logic as I understand it. Are you being paid for this new trick, as no doubt you were for the old?"

Denis flushed crimson.

"Prince Karl, madame," said he, "has at no time asked me or sent me to speak for him, and you pay love a sorry compliment to think that it may never be unselfish. I

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should love you but ill should I not wish for you all the happiness, at whatever cost to me, that Fortune can offer. Even were you not another man's wife, I know that you could never feel again for me anything but loathing and despite. I am not to be considered at all. But the Prince, madame, is a gentleman, and he loves you. It would give me the nearest approach to content that the world has now to offer if I could know you happy with him and reigning over Novodnia."

The Princess sat staring at the ground, and her breathing came a bit fast.

"That were love indeed, sir," she said in a half-whisper.

"And as for payment," he went on, "I have a perverse fancy that you should know the worst of the truth. Sir Gavin and the other gentlemen concerned chose me to play the part of the Prince because no one of them could bring himself to do it—it was too base. They found me in a café one evening, drunk, as I often was, and told me their plans. They knew me for a good-for-nothing loafer, an ex-soldier of fortune, who'd nothing to show for his soldiering but an ill name, an empty pocket, and a constant thirst, who made a wretched living by writing for some London papers. They knew that few things were too low for me to undertake, but that I wouldn't be quite low enough to play them false, and they—they offered money—forty pounds a month—to do this work. I was drunk, as I've said, and I agreed—— Wait—wait a moment! After I'd been with you that first afternoon, I refused the money, and there's been no question of payment since. Still, there was once, and for that I shall never forgive myself. That was the basest of all."

The Princess turned wearily away from him.

"It is all of an equal baseness, sir," said she. "You can surprise me with no low details. The life you've lived, what you have been or are or will be, are of no interest to me. I know only that you made me love you with your lying words of honour and tenderness, with your lying eyes and lying smile, and that now I hate you, despise you, as I hate and despise and loathe myself! Have you done, for I can bear no more of this?"

"But one thing more, and I have done," said he—"one very little thing." He put a hand into his waistcoat breast-pocket and drew out a little knot of narrow pink ribbons.

"You wore this," said he, "upon the breast of your white gown that first day. It came unfastened and fell when you were not looking, and I picked it up and kept it. I have had it ever since; it has never left me, night nor day."

He held out the little knot of ribbons towards her, but the Princess shrank back.

"I could not touch it, sir," said she.

His hand shook, and the knot of ribbons fell to the ground at their feet. He stooped and picked it up quickly and held it between his hands at his breast. The Princess saw his face and looked away.

Then he stood aside and bowed.

"If I have your permission, madame," said he in a very low voice, "I will go. I shall not intrude upon you nor try to see you again."

The Princess Eleanor, up in her chamber, pulled aside the white curtains and looked down into the garden. The old stone bench was hidden by shrubbery, but the fountain gleamed through the new leaves with a trickle and spurt of running water.

"And now," said the Princess Eleanor, in a low, tired voice—"now I have hurt you as much as you have hurt me. Now I've made you suffer as much as you made me suffer, and you'll hate me as I—as I hate you, for no man can ever forgive what I have said to you, the insults I've heaped upon you. They'll burn you so long as you live, Denis—'Denis!' I like your new name, Carlo; it's Irish, isn't it?—as the lying speeches you've made to me must burn always, as—God pity me!—the love I bear you must burn in my shamed heart till I die!" cried the Princess Eleanor, and fell to sobbing most bitterly.

CHAPTER XV.

BUT meanwhile I had grown tired of waiting for Denis to finish his walk in the garden—he seemed so long over it—and at last went off grumbling to my rooms in the Boulevard Montparnasse to dress, for I was dining across the river with some friends.

We dined at Durand's, in the Place de la Madeleine, and I saw the others into their cabs outside the door at something like ten o'clock or a bit after. Then I turned down the Rue Royale towards the Place de la Concorde, for I'd some notion of dropping in at Maxim's; but the Taverne Royale looked so bright and gay and attractive as I passed, and the refrain of a waltz which the Spanish orchestra was playing sounded so alluring, that I turned in there instead and looked about for a vacant table. The big salle was

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nearly full, but I found a table at last in the forward corner, and made my way over to it through the crowd of late diners and smartly dressed loungers who were listening to the music.

The table at my left was surrounded by a group of young Frenchmen of the well-to-do étudiant type—that is to say, grown children, irrepressible in spirits and mischief. They seemed to have picked for the temporary butt of their silly and ill-natured jokes a man who sat alone at the little table on my right, a very German-looking person of forty or thereabouts, with red, full cheeks and pursy eyes and very fiercely turned-up moustaches à l'Empereur Guillaume.

A German may, nowadays, work among the rapins of a Latin-quarter studio, subject to little or no insult, so common has he become, but these particular young ruffians of the Taverne Royale seemed determined to avenge poor, wreath-hung Strasbourg, there in the Place de la Concorde, and were making things interesting in a quiet but sufficiently audible manner for the gentleman with the upturned moustaches.

As for me, I was trying to determine where I had seen him before. His face had an oddly familiar look. I knew no end of Germans. I had hobnobbed with them from Bremen to the Forest, and from Frankfürt to Vienna, but I could place this man nowhere in the list.

He was drinking Bière de Munich—Spatenbraü—in great half-litre mugs which he ground solemnly upon the table, with that little rotary motion, before raising to his lips. His right eyelid had a chronic droop that gave him a rather sinister look, and he wore a monocle over that eye. Where had I seen that drooping eyelid?

I leaned over and begged him for a match—there was no box upon my table—and he turned to me with a sort of eagerness. The Frenchmen had annoyed him despite his German stolidity. I made some commonplace remark, I remember, about the music or the weather, and he answered with an apparent delight at hearing his mother-tongue. He dropped the monocle from his eye as he spoke, and I had to lower my gaze swiftly and choke back the exclamation that rose to my lips, for I knew him now. It was the eyeglass that had deceived me.

Then I set in, unashamedly, to pump the man, on the chance that among many lies there might be a truth or a hint of value.

It was rather good sport, for he had no notion whatever that we had met—"in a way o' speakin'" as MacKenzie would say—before.

Was he in Paris merely as a traveller, then?

Yes, he was here for a short time only. He was from Vienna. "And that," said I inwardly, "is indirectly true." His name was Swartzkopfen—"not by any chance Von Steinbrücke?" said I again—to myself. My name was Jenkins, and I was from Manchester, where I manufactured toys. Herr von Swartzkopfen was in Paris for no long stop, then?

No, oh, no; he was here on a mission—"True again, "thought I—a mission which would be consummated within the next two or three days.

"The devil it will!" said I to myself. "I'd give something to know just what the mission is, my friend." After which, certain events must determine his movements for the next fortnight.

And he had found pleasant quarters while in the city? He was stopping at one of the hotels, of course?

But here Herr Swartzkopfen von Steinbrücke caressed the fierce moustaches and murmured something vague about friends on the other side of the river, and I changed the topic to a safer, remoter one, for it wouldn't do at all to alarm the man. There might still be something wormed out of him unawares.

We talked for a long time of many things—"shoes and ships and sealing-wax and cabbages and kings"—and I found Herr von Steinbrücke, ex-card sharper, sometime blackmailer, refugee from Austrian justice, and presently Pavelovitch catspaw, interesting in the extreme.

He told me tales, wondrous tales! If only I could put them upon paper! Tales of queer happenings at Vienna, at Trieste, at Salzburg, at Weisbaden, tales of carelessly cloaked great names—I had now shunted him from Spatenbraü to more potent and fiery things, so that his tongue was loosened and his face grew redder. He told me tales of his own deeds, boastfully and with no seeming shame—he was drinking brandy now—deeds unspeakable for utter blackguardism; and I smiled and shoved the little decanter towards him. He told me bits of Court gossip from Vienna, of strange bargains made and promises given, of strange plans afoot for a repainting of the map of Europe when the beloved old Emperor should come to his death. By my faith! the Press of the civilised world would have

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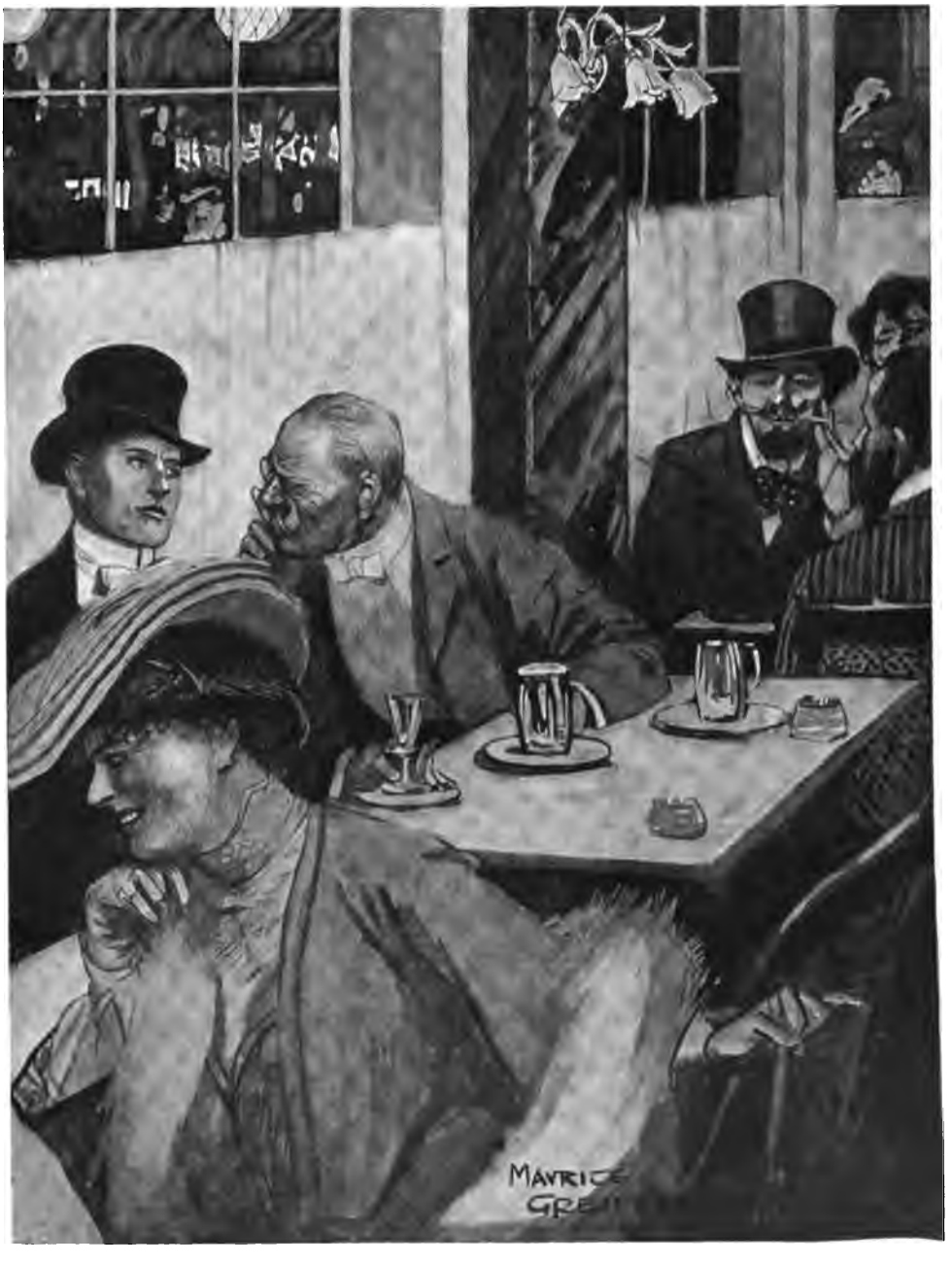

"Tales of queer happenings at Vienna, Trieste."

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burned the next morning with startling news could those rambling, guttural, Viennese accents have reached its ears!

And at last, when the husky voice had grown lower and had come to wandering into silly repetitions and foolish pleasantries, I steered the talk again—with inward trembling—to the present time.

Doubtless his mission in Paris was connected with some of these great folk, matters to be trusted only to one old in craft and secret business?

The foolish head wagged knowingly, and that sinister eyelid drooped lower.

His mission, by Heaven! was important enough, if anyone should ask you! It had to do with a prince! Herr Gott, yes! but, mind you, the prince was not to be a prince long! Eh! strange things happened sometimes when two men wanted the same seat! I think I jumped at this—— No, he was not to be a prince long. He wouldn't find it convenient to return to his throne. There was a chuckling laugh here. Ah, then! this prince was in Paris?

Aye, he was in Paris, the silly fool! And in Paris he was to remain—Paris, or—somewhere. He wasn't going home—and there was another chuckling laugh.

So, then, Denis was wrong! It was the Prince who was to be kidnapped or killed, after all! I turned again to the drunken Austrian eagerly.

But surely putting princes out of the way had its elements of danger?

The Austrian straightened up in his chair with a jerk, and drew his brows together with a great effort of mental concentration. It was as if he realised that he had made a rash slip and must be cautious.

Putting princes out of the way? Who talked of putting princes out of the way? I was mad! What had he to do with princes? And he rapped loudly upon the table for his addition.

There was nothing more to be made out of him, it seemed, but I went to the door with him, talking pleasantly the while, and stood upon the kerb while he called a cab.

"There'll be no harm in just making a note of where you lodge, my friend," said I to myself.

He stumbled into the fiacre, told the cocher to drive to the devil, and off they dashed, with a parting wave of the hand to me.

"But you don't give me the slip so easily as all that," I protested, and was after them in an instant with another cab.

"Follow that fiacre with the grey horse," said I to my cocher, "and a louis if you don't lose sight of it, wherever it goes!"

We were caught in a jam of traffic at the foot of the Rue Royale, but I made out the cab with the grey horse some little way ahead of us, caught as well.

Then presently we were off, across the Place de la Concorde and up the Champs Élysées.

"What!" said I, "up here? I should have thought you'd keep closer to the prey, man—somewhere on the other side of the river."

We went far up the Champs Élysées, through the Place de l'Étoile, and into the Avenue Kléber. "Upon my word, Von Steinbrücke, you're living well!" thought I.

Then, at last, the fiacre with the grey horse pulled up before one of the high, imposing houses that line the avenue, and—a thin little man with a great beard politely assisted his corpulent and bejewelled wife to alight, and they rang the bell at the big iron grille.

I threw myself back upon the cushions. It was that jam in the Rue Royale that had done for us, and one grey horse looks much like another when you've lost sight of the first for a moment.

"81, Boulevard Montparnasse!" I growled to the cocher, and called myself unpleasant names all the long way home.

In the Boulevard Montparnasse I changed my mind and told the cocher to go up to the Rue Boissonade, for I'd left in Mallory's studio a little note-book that I should be wanting early in the morning.

"I shall probably have to knock poor Denis up," said I, with a laugh, as I rang and waited for the concierge's wire cordon to unlock the gate in the iron fence. "He'll have turned in by now."

He hadn't turned in, though; that was evident, for there was a bright light in the studio. I banged at the door, and hearing no reply, opened it—it was seldom locked—and went in.

The reek of absinth struck me in the face as soon as the door was opened. There was, as I have said, a bright light. It came from the big overhead lamp, with its reflectors, that threw a glare down upon what was beneath.

The forward end of the room seemed full of a huddled mass of broken furniture; a carved table, two chairs smashed to bits—they must have been thrown there violently—an easel, and some of the heavier articles

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that had hung upon the wall. There were two broken glasses and a carafe upon the floor, and an overturned absinth bottle lay in a little pool of its former contents.

But what drew from me a cry of horror and dread was not the heap of smashed furniture, nor the broken glasses, nor the sickening smell of absinth, but something else.

Denis lay stretched along the floor, face down, his head towards the débris at the end of the room. One arm—the right one—lay out before him, a sabre in its clenched hand. Three or four inches were broken from the sabre's point, and the heap of chairs and other things were chopped and hacked as if with an axe.

His left arm lay across the floor, and he was quite still.

Poor old Denis! The walls had come together again and tried to catch him! Had they done it?

I ran to him and turned him over on his back. His jaw dropped as the head fell backward, and I think my heart quite stopped beating. There was a deep cut over one eye, from which the blood had run freely and was caked upon his brow and down across one cheek. He must have struck the table-edge or a chair when he fell.

I tore his clenched fingers from the sabre's hilt and loosened his collar. Then I found some water and dashed it into his face again and again, covering his mouth lest it should drown him. There was no sign of life, and my heart stopped again, but I tore off my coat and hat and set to work furiously.

"He's not dead!" I cried. "By Heaven, he *shan't* die!"

And at last, after I had worked over him for quite ten or fifteen minutes, I suppose—it seemed hours—his eyelids quivered and twitched, and he began to gasp feebly and to move his lips. I put forth all my strength and lifted him to the divan, and—because I could find nothing else—I forced between his teeth a little of the absinth that remained in the overturned bottle.

He moved his head from side to side, and his eyes unclosed.

"They—they didn't catch me?" he whispered feebly. "They didn't—catch me—the walls?"

"No, dear old chap!" said I, "they didn't catch you, thank God! nor shall while I'm alive to prevent it! We won't give them another chance!"

"Why, it's—it's Teddy!" he murmured with a weak surprise. "Dear lad, how came you here? Ah! I've had a time, Teddy! the very devil of a time! They—they nearly had me, Teddy, lad."

"They shan't have another chance, Denis," said I again, and slipped an arm under him to raise his head. "Hallo! what the deuce is this?"

The left hand still held a little knot of narrow pink ribbons, such as women love to wear about them here and there—where it's monstrous becoming, I protest.

"Why, it's nothing, dear lad," he whispered, "just nothing at all—a rag, a foolish thing I—I came by accidentally. It means nothing—throw it away for me, Teddy. Why should I be holding to it? Nay, nay!" as I made to take it from his fingers, "let it be, lad; I'll—I'll throw it away myself. You needn't bother. A bit o' pink ribbon! Heavens! a bit o' pink ribbon! What's a bit o' pink ribbon to a man, Ted? Hold me up to you, lad, I'm—most outrageous tired—and—sleepy."

CHAPTER XVI.

We sat, as was still our custom, in the studio the five of us: Mackenzie and the Prince—your pardon, princes surely have precedence over Birthday knights—the Prince and MacKenzie, then; Von Altdorf, Denis, and I.

The Prince wore an eager and happy air, albeit a trifle nervous, for he was at last to have his interview with the Princess Eleanor that evening. Colonel von Altdorf's habitual anxiety seemed to have left him in view of his master's prospective departure for Novodnia. Denis, with a somewhat pallid cheek and a patch of plaster over one temple, as witnesses of last night's work, seemed much as ever, though silent and smiling little.

I was telling them of my meeting with Herr von Steinbrücke, and of Von Steinbrücke's boast that his mission in Paris was in two or three days to be fulfilled.

"But in less than two or three days," said Von Altdorf, "the Prince will be far from Paris and well on his way to Novodnia, thank God! Steinbrücke is too late, for once in his life," and he lay back in his chair with a sigh of relief.

Then, before anyone could answer him, there came from outside swift footsteps, as of one running, and a noise at the door as if someone had fallen against it. I, who sat

nearest, sprang to the door and threw it open, and then fell back with a cry of alarm.

The woman who clung to the doorway white and shaking, gasping for breath, was Miss Jessica Mannering. She wore no hat, and the hair was blown loose about her face. Her eyes were very wide and terror-stricken, and her breath came in great, dry sobs as if she had been running a long distance.

She pushed by me into the room.

"They've got the—Princess!" she cried weakly. "They've got the—Princess! Oh, don't you—hear me? They've got the—Princess!" She dropped down suddenly upon the floor by the great divan, and her head fell forward among the cushions.

The Prince, Von Altdorf, and MacKenzie sat in their chairs like dead men, staring. And I stood by the open door, saying over and over with a tongue that took no heed of itself: "They've got the Princess! They've got the Princess!"

But Denis sprang quickly to the girl's side and raised her head in his arms. His face was keen and eager and alert. His eyes seemed almost glad, flashed with their old quick fire as he bent over Miss Mannering.

The girl's head moved weakly back and forth upon his shoulder, and her eyelids fluttered. She had not fainted, but she was perilously near it.

Mallory's face rose with a jerk.

"The flask, lad!" said he. "Look sharp!"

I forced my stubborn legs from their trance at last and brought him a flask from the mantelshelf. He forced some of the liquor between the girl's teeth, and her eyes opened slowly and a bit of colour came to her cheeks.

"That's better!" said Denis, smiling down cheerfully, "that's better! Just a bit more, now."

"Oh, they've got — the Princess!" she whispered, and turned her face with a little moan so that it was hidden against his breast.

"Aye!" said Denis, soft as a woman. "Aye, we know, we know. Never you fear! We'll get her back—just a drop more of the brandy, now—aye, they've got the Princess. When you're strong enough, tell us all you know—take your time—just a drop more before you begin. Now, then!"

The girl raised herself, holding to his arm, till she was half upon her knees, half resting against him. His arm held her waist, and her head lay against his shoulder. She was still very weak and trembling and breathless.

"They—they took her—away in—in a cab," she whispered. "They told her—a lying tale about—about the Prince. I was away—shopping. I reached home only a few moments ago, and—and the servants told me."

She paused, breathless, and took a sip from the flask that Denis held to her lips.

"A man came—came to the house—the servants say a tall, fair man with an eyeglass——"

"Von Steinbrücke, hang him!" cried the Prince.

Denis held up a warning hand.

"—and—and said that the—Prince was very—ill, had been hurt in a carriage accident, and might—die, that he was lying in his apartments, and that Colonel von Altdorf was—was with him. The man said that the Prince begged she would—come to him at once—before he died——"

"Oh, what a trick!" groaned the Prince, his hands over his face. "What a black-guardly trick!"

"She — she waited only to take a wrap and a hat, and—went with him. He had a carriage waiting. The servants say there was one other man in the carriage, a smaller man. They—they drove away quickly—and that's—that's all! Oh, Mr. Mallory! think of her in those men's clutches! Can't you save her?" and the poor young woman broke down in a piteous fit of weeping with her face upon Mallory's shoulder.

"Save her?" he cried, gently stroking the loosened black hair. "Why, yes, yes, of course we'll save her! Never fear, we'll save her right enough."

He lifted the girl to the divan and made a sign to Von Altdorf to come to her there —which seemed a task much to that gentleman's liking. Then he rose and stood in the centre of the room, thinking rapidly.

"Save her?" he cried again, but as if to himself. "Aye, we'll save her! But what to do? What to do? Those fools of servants won't have noticed anything that could help us, and Steinbrücke's no such fool as to have taken a cab from any stand near here. The police? No, the police are out of the question. The thing mustn't get abroad. Steinbrücke knows that. Will he take her out of Paris, I wonder? Ted, Ted, if only you'd managed to trace the

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man to his lodgings! Oh, Teddy, you're no detective!"

He walked up and down the room for some minutes, head bent, brow creased, and hands smiting softly together. We all watched him and waited for him to speak.

I think his taking the lead thus, at once, and without question or hesitation, moved us to no surprise—if we thought of it at all—but rather seemed most natural. Even old MacKenzie watched his face with an anxious eye; and from the divan, Colonel von Altdorf's ministrations as nurse and comforter became absent and perfunctory while his eyes followed the restless march up and down the room.

"I must see the servants," he said after awhile. "They may have noticed something about the fiacre, the horse's colour, the look of the cocher, something to give us a clue. It's just possible."

He halted before the divan.

"You've a cipher code for telegraphing to trustworthy friends in Novodnia?" he demanded.

"Naturally," said Colonel von Altdorf, a bit piqued that he should be questioned about so elementary a precaution.

"Then listen, man!" cried Denis swiftly. "You'll telegraph at once to the best man you have down there—the very best—to intercept any communications they can between Georgias and Von Steinbrücke–bribe Georgias' servants—do anything possible to find out where Steinbrücke is now; for where he is, the Princess will be. Tell them to spare no pains and to work quickly. It's our best hope, their efforts. Ted, you'll come with me to the house—no, no, not the door, the window and the garden; it's quickest. We must find if the servants have taken notice of Steinbrücke's fiacre; and then you're to prowl about the city looking out for it. Sir Gavin, you'll take care of Miss Mannering."

The girl raised her face at the mention of her name and reached an arm towards him. He dropped on one knee beside the divan and smiled into her eyes.

"Everything will be done that men can do," said he gently. "We'll have her back again before you know it. You mustn't worry nor break down nor fall ill, because we shall need you. Go home now with Sir Gavin and rest. We've all much to do." Then he came over to me at the little window, and we ran up through the garden to the old convent.

The servants were quite as stupid as one could have expected. No, they had noticed nothing peculiar about the fiacre. Why should one notice a fiacre? They were all alike, parbleu!

But the gentleman, he had an eyeglass, a monocle in the right eye, and spoke French with an accent——

"Yes, yes!" cried Denis impatiently, "we know all about the gentleman and his eyeglass! What sort of a fiacre? Did no one notice the horse—what colour was it?"

But here, a gardener who had been repairing the spikes on top of the high wall near the entrance declared that the horse had been grey, with a rat tail, a very old and tired horse.

"Our friend Steinbrücke seems to have a certain fancy for grey horses," observed Denis Mallory. "A grey horse! Good, so far! And the cocher, was he of the Compagnie Générale or the Compagnie Urbaine? In other words, did he wear a dark coat and a black hat, or a tan coat and a white hat?"

"A black hat." The gardener was quite positive. The cocher had been of the Compagnie Générale. And there were no yellow markings on the fiacre, which was an old one, old as the grey horse and the grey cocher. Anything else? No, nothing—but yes, on second thought—the cocher had worn a mourning-band about his left arm.

Further than this we could extract nothing from the two or three servants who had seen the Princess's departure, save that the fiacre, hood raised, had driven off up the Rue Denfert Rochereau toward the Place du Lion—"which means nothing," commented Denis Mallory. "They might go in any direction to elude a possible pursuit. Ted, you must take a fiacre and cover the city, so far as you can, passing all the cab-ranks possible, on the watch for a battered old voiture of the Compagnie Générale, a voiture with an old grey horse and an old grey cocher who wears a mourning-badge. The only quarter you need not search is this one about us—Steinbrücke's no fool. If you find the man, bring him here at once and don't let him out of sight till I've seen him. As for me, I'm off to see a friend of mine, a police-official, whom I did a good turn once. I said the police were out of the question, and so they are, in the usual way; but I think I can find if our friends leave Paris, without anyone knowing save a very few people who'll never tell. My official will have all the outgoing trains watched, but he'll have it done quite unofficially. There's nothing like a friend in the police, Teddy. Off with you, now! We must lose no time."

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I should be but wearisome were I to go into the details of my exhaustive search for the rest of that day and the whole of the two days following. I made a plan of the city and covered it patiently, avenue by avenue, boulevard by boulevard, scrutinising each cab-rank, as I passed, with an anxious, hopeful eye. It seemed that half the cab-horses in Paris were grey and half the cochers old. Nay, by the second day I did better. I went to every stable of the Compagnie Générale and asked for a voiture and a cocher which would answer my description. And many a fruitless errand I was sent upon, too, but I never found the old colignon with the mourning-band and the battered fiacre.

Colonel von Altdorf had, meanwhile, telegraphed instructions to trusty colleagues in Novodnia—the fullest of instructions—and was employing his time, till a reply might come, with guarding and reassuring the Prince, who, poor gentleman, was almost beside himself with grief and impotent fear for his wife's safety. He would have been off alone in a mad search for her had we let him out of our sight for a moment. Aye, he loved his wife, did Karl of Novodnia, and it nearly broke his heart to sit still, holding his hands, while she was, God knew where, in the power of that devil Steinbrücke.

Denis had gone immediately to his friend of the police, and no train left Paris from any station but was quietly and unobtrusively watched. Indeed, no vehicle passed by road out of any of the gates without examination. Denis's service to the police official must have been of consequence.

Further than this, he acted most curiously. He spent little time at the studio—we saw him at infrequent intervals—but appeared to pass his hours loafing about the terrasses of cafés with students and cocottes. I saw him several times as I was driving about on my fruitless search—once in Montmartre, once on the Boulevard Sevastopol, and once on the Boul' Miche' at the d'Harcourt. This last time I pulled up at the kerb and signalled to him. He was sitting at a little table, surrounded by the sort that frequents this particular café—and it is the worst sort of the whole Boulevard St. Michel. Well, it was at the end of a long, hard day wholly without results, and I suppose I was out of temper with fatigue and disappointment. I suppose I spoke sharply to him—he had seemed so care-free and at his ease there amongst vauriens and foolish women. His eyes flashed up at me an instant, as he stood by the wheel—an angry flash. I half raised my arm. Then he laughed.

"You're a good old chap, Teddy," said he, "and you're doing good work, but you've small imagination. Man, I've set an army of detectives at work throughout Paris that not the whole police of the Continent of Europe could equal. Half the lazy, loafing rascals in the city, and nearly all their lady friends, are on the look-out for Von Steinbrücke. They'll find him if he's here. Ah, Ted, there come times when a wasted life turns up trumps. Make to yourself friends o' the mammon of unrighteousness, Teddy; it may stand you in. Run away home, now; I'm busy. I've the the very littlest trace of a clue, the very littlest, but still a clue. Found your cocher yet? No? I didn't expect you would. Steinbrücke's no fool, eh? Run along, now."

And that night, as we sat planning and comparing notes in the studio, Denis for once among us, a long telegram in cipher came to Von Altdorf, several pages of it.

"Good old Czerowitz!" he cried. "I knew Czerowitz would do the work. See, he's sent the thing from Vienna! That means he wouldn't risk the wires from Novodni or Belgrade, but had a messenger go to Vienna and telegraph from there—good old Czerowitz!"

Then he sat down at Denis's table with pen and paper and translated the cipher.

"'Message to Georgias from Paris, viâ Vienna, Belgrade, and Novodni, to Makarin in the hills,'" he said presently. "'Wire cut—by my orders—between Novodni and Makarin — message read only by — trustworthy — operator — message follows —— "She is — in our hands—— He, well guarded—we remain—Paris till—orders from you—— Safe hiding-place"—end of message—wires cut or guarded—borders watched — believe communications successfully — broken. Address Hoffmeyer, Bristol, Vienna.'"

Von Altdorf threw down his pen and beat upon the table with his fist.

"Sir," he cried, turning to the Prince. "I recommend Commandant Czerowitz for advancement in your service. He's a man in a million! The thing couldn't have been better done!"

But the Prince's eyes were wide and eager.

"She's in Paris, then?" said he. "She's in Paris? Thank God! We shall find her! Gentlemen, *we must* find her!"

Denis nodded from his corner.

"We'll find her, sir," he promised.

But old MacKenzie, stiff and gloomy on

"Denis lay stretched along the floor."

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the divan, shook his big head and blew a cloud of smoke from his briar.

"Will ye, though?" he growled. "Paris is a wide covert, my lad, an' yon villain of an Austrian is no fool! Look to your work if ye'd outwit him."

And indeed Denis's promise seemed a rash one, for day after day went by and we made no progress. Von Altdorf continued to hear from Novodnia through his agent at Vienna. Georgias' communications with Von Steinbrücke seemed definitely to have been interrupted. The latter must have suspected that something was wrong, for he ceased, after a time, sending messages, but of his whereabouts in Paris we gained no clue.

Of Denis we saw little. He was off upon searches and consultations all of the day and most of the night, and of what he was doing he saw fit to tell us nothing. That he was working desperately we knew, and that the strain and anxiety were telling upon him was only too apparent, for he grew thinner and paler day by day, and his eyes took on a look that I dreaded to see.

Ah, well! it was a bad week for us all.

But on the fifth day after the Princess Eleanor's capture, our waiting was brought to a sudden end.

CHAPTER XVII.

COLONEL VON ALTDORF, passing along the Boulevard des Italiens, where he had been making some necessary purchases, ran upon Denis, who was engaged in certain of his secret investigations, and the two walked down together to the Place de l'Opéra.

"We might step in at the Café de la Paix for a moment," suggested Von Altdorf. "I'm fagged a bit, and you look quite done up. Take it easier, lad; fretting yourself to death won't do any good. I know it's a bad enough business, but—— Great Heavens! Here, turn your back quickly. No, come around in front. Look sharp, man! look sharp!"

They had been standing at the corner of the wide terrasse of the Café de la Paix which fronts both the boulevard and the Auber. The triple tier of little tables on the boulevard side is always crowded of an afternoon, and was at this time; but on the side facing the Rue Auber there are commonly but few people, the overflow from the front.

Colonel von Altdorf dragged Denis along the boulevard side till they were out of sight from the tables upon the Rue Auber. His voice shook a bit with excitement when he spoke.

"Listen!" said he. "The tall, light-haired man with the eyeglass sitting in the rear row of tables on the Rue Auber terrasse is Baron von Steinbrücke. He's never seen you, and of course won't know who you are. When he leaves, shadow him. Don't lose sight of him for your life. The whole game is in our hands now if you succeed in tracking him to his quarters. Here, take a seat at this table near the corner, against the wall. You can see him from here, but he can't see you. I'm going to have a little chat with him. It can't do any harm, and may be amusing. I shall go away soon. When he sees me out of sight, he'll bolt. Then's your chance."

Denis seated himself at the little table against the wall and ordered a vermouth sec, and Colonel von Altdorf strolled around the corner, swinging his stick and nonchalantly searching for a place. His eye lit up with genuine pleasure as he caught sight of the gentleman with the eyeglass, and he advanced with outstretched hand.

"What! you in Paris, my dear Baron?" he cried in a tone of delighted surprise. "And you never looked me up!" he protested sorrowfully, as he dropped into a chair. "Ah, that wasn't kind!"

The light-haired gentleman with the eyeglass took one quick breath, and his drooping eyelid hung a bit lower. He licked his lips as if he found them suddenly dry, but the florid colour in his cheeks never deepened or paled, and presently he smiled.

"Well, you see," he began slowly and as if with some reluctance, "you see, my dear Colonel, I'm not here *in propria persona*, as it were. I'm here on important business—business connected with the Prince," he added maliciously.

"Ah!" said the Colonel in a pleasant tone.

"He left Novodnia rather—er—suddenly," commented the light-haired gentleman with the eyeglass.

"Why, yes," said Von Altdorf, "rather suddenly, as you say. Still, a prince may do as he will. Besides, he wanted to see me upon matters of importance. And Paris in the spring-time isn't a bad place to spend a fortnight."

"And the—er—lady?" suggested Von Steinbrücke in a deprecatory tone.

Von Altdorf laughed.

"To be sure!" he cried, "the lady! We mustn't forget the love affair! Ah, well!

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shan't a young man have his little flirtations, even if he's a prince? Jeunesse, jeunesse! We also were young once, Baron."

Baron von Steinbrücke took a long draught of beer from the mug before him, and that sinister eyelid drooped.

"Still, when we were young," he objected, "we didn't call love-making with our wives flirtation, did we?

Von Altdorf allowed himself another laugh.

"Wives? wives?" he cried. "Come, my dear Baron, you're too old a fox to have believed that silly tale of the Prince's marriage! That was Pavelovitch talk, political lies. Why, surely if the Prince were married to this—er—lady, he'd not have gone back to Novodnia last night alone! He'd have taken her with him—even if he had to wait a bit till she was ready."

The beer-mug clattered slightly upon the marble top of the little table, but Baron von Steinbrücke's smile was undisturbed.

"The Prince gone back?" he inquired. "Why, then, my man who watches the Prince's lodgings must be a shocking liar, mustn't he, for he says the Prince is still very much here?"

"But, you see," protested Colonel von Altdorf, "you see, that man is in my pay. He's hardly a reliable spy. I'd discharge him if I were you, Baron."

Baron von Steinbrücke smiled appreciatively and shook his head.

"No," said he, still smiling, "no, it won't do, my friend. Were I a younger man, or hadn't we met before, I might be disturbed; but—no, it won't do. Come, Colonel, we beat about the bush. Why not be frank? I've got your Princess—or, at least, the lady that Karl wants to make a princess. I've got her in safe keeping, and I shall hold her there as long as I like."

"And that," suggested the Colonel, "that will be as long——"

"As long as it is necessary to keep Prince Karl out of Novodnia, for he'll never go back there with his wife in durance. He'll search till he's found her. Meanwhile—why, meanwhile there's an empty seat in the palace at Novodni, Colonel, and a populace very, very discontented at the notion of a foreign, commoner princess, and none too pleased at the Prince's absence—perhaps none too pleased with the Prince in any event. Shall the seat remain empty, my friend? There's a man in the mountains would fill it well. Ah! we've the upper hand of you this time, Colonel."

Colonel von Altdorf leaned over the little table and smiled pleasantly into the Austrian's eyes.

"You've stated the conditions, Baron," said he; "that is, you've stated them from your point of view—I hold another. But they were to lead up to something. The proposition, my friend?"

Baron von Steinbrücke removed his eyeglass and polished it with some care. He showed the slightest trace of nervousness, the very slightest possible.

"Why, as for that," said he, with a shrug, "I've no great love for George and his crew."

"Ah!" breathed Colonel von Altdorf. "You'd sell out? I thought so. And the —er—price?"

Von Steinbrücke gave a little, nervous laugh, it would seem of relief.

"It's not prohibitive," said he lightly. "A warm berth at Court, enough to pay one's little gaming debts, to keep against one's old age. Herr Gott! shall a man serve a mob of bandits, of prowling pretenders, when he might take the place his merits deserve in a reigning prince's train? Come, give me countenance at Court and an income, and we'll send Georgias to the devil! I'm tired of sneaking and intrigue. Let Karl have his nest-mate—by Heaven! I like his taste: she's a beauty!—and we'll all go back to Novodni for the coronation."

Colonel von Altdorf appeared to be meditating.

"And our warrant that you'll be faithful to us?" he inquired presently. "How are we to know sure that you won't sell us out in turn to Georgias or someone else?"

"My word of honour," said the Baron von Steinbrücke pompously.

Von Altdorf laughed.

"Come, come, Baron!" he cried.

The Baron flushed purple and cursed softly to himself.

Colonel von Altdorf leaned once more over the little table, his elbows among the glasses and saucers.

"I have known you, Baron," said he slowly, "for many years; I knew of you for many years before ever I saw you; and in all that time I have never heard any good of you, nothing but bad faith, dishonour, and disgrace. I know you for liar, card-cheat, blackmailer, husband of convenience—— Keep your hands down, Baron von Steinbrücke! this is a conspicuous corner—catspaw for criminals in high places whose own hands must be concealed, panderer to a rotten nobility, blackguard in general!

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You've won money by sharp play from your own guests in your own house. You've compromised women of rank and demanded money of them to hold your tongue. There's been no deed so vile, so foul that you wouldn't do it for a price—— And now you ask Prince Karl of Novodnia for a place in his Court, and offer your word of honour —honour, forsooth!—that you will be his faithful subject!

"I don't know, sir, why a God, whom we are taught is all-wise, allows such swine as you to wander and root upon the earth; possibly for an example to men of honour of how low human nature without that honour may be brought. As for Prince Karl and us, his friends, we want none of you save as an enemy. I wish Georgias joy of your loyalty."

The Austrian's hand shook upon his beer-mug, and his face writhed and twisted in a snarl almost canine. He dared not, as Von Altdorf well knew, provoke a brawl in front of the Café de la Paix. He dared not strike with the heavy beer-mug at which his fingers clutched longingly. He dared not even raise his voice, with the two dapper-looking gendarmes standing at ease half-a-dozen paces from where he sat.

"By Heaven, you'll pay for this!" he cried softly, and his voice trembled with rage. "You'll pay for the pleasure of sitting here and blackguarding me as you like. I've got the woman, curse you! She'll be the worse for your fine speech, my Colonel! She'll pay!"

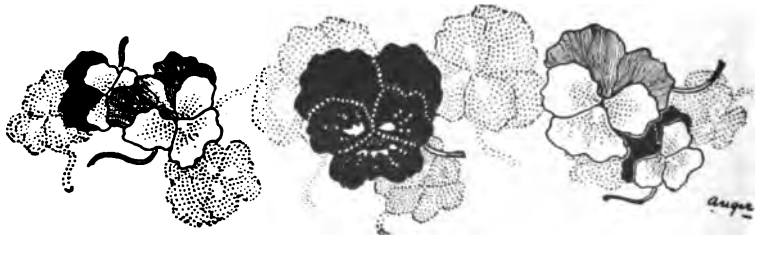
Colonel von Altdorf's face set all at once hard and stern, and his eyes glowed from under drawn brows.

"No, she won't," said he; "no, she won't, my blackleg! What you're after is to keep Prince Karl out of Novodnia. If you kill the Princess, there is nothing left to prevent him from returning. If you harm her in any littlest way, you'll be hounded over the Continent of Europe—aye, and over as many continents as lie between seas—till you're dead. You know Karl as well as I do. Happy, with a restored and unhurt wife, he may prove a forgiving or a careless foe; but bring any harm to this woman, and God have mercy on your soul, Von Steinbrücke; Karl of Novodnia will have none on your body, nor Karl's friends or servants either. Abduction, as a political trick, is all very well, but see you to it that it goes no further. And now I'll be moving on. I saw you here, Von Steinbrücke, and took it into my head to have a bit of chat with you. The chat has been delightful. It has relieved a congested temper. Good afternoon, my adventurous friend—oh, and a word of warning! Stick to beer when you're out of an evening. Hotter liquors muddle the judgment. Jenkins, of Manchester, tells queer tales of you—— Good afternoon, Herr Baron."

He caught one glance at the Austrian's face when Jenkins, of Manchester, was mentioned, and the glance seemed to amuse him. Then he yawned slightly, took up his stick and gloves, and moved to the kerb.

An omnibus, bound for the Place St. Michel, came down the Rue Auber and halted at the corner to wait for a chance to cross the crowded boulevard. Von Altdorf stepped upon the platform and mounted to the impériale, where he sat smiling and contented while the clumsy vehicle rolled down the Avenue de l'Opéra. Herr von Steinbrücke gazed after it with open mouth.

(*To be continued.*)



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THE FREEDOM OF THE BLACK-FACED RAM.

By Charles G. D. Roberts.*

On the top of Ringwaak Hill the black-faced ram stood motionless, looking off with mild, yellow eyes across the wooded level, across the scattered farmsteads of the settlement, across the bright, retreating spirals of the distant river, to that streak of scarlet light on the horizon which meant the first of sunrise. A few paces below him, half hidden by a grey stump, a green juniper bush, and a mossy, brown hillock, lay a white ewe with a lamb at her side. The ewe's jaws moved leisurely, as she chewed her cud and gazed up with comfortable confidence at the sturdy figure of the ram silhouetted against the brightening sky.

This sunrise was the breaking of the black-faced ram's first day in the wilderness. Never before had he stood on an open hilltop and watched the light spread magically over a wide, wild landscape. Up to the morning of the previous day his three years of life had been passed in protected, green-hedged valley pastures, amid tilled fields and well-stocked barns, beside a lilied water. This rugged, lonely, wide-visioned world into which fortune had unexpectedly projected him filled him with wonder. Yet he felt strangely at ease therein. The hedged pastures had never quite suited him; but here, at last, in the great spaces, he felt at home. The fact was that, alike in character and in outward appearance, the black-faced ram was a reversion to far-off ancestors. He was the product of a freak of heredity.

In the fat-soiled valley-lands some fifteen miles back of the Ringwaak Hill, the farmers had a heavy, long-wooled, hornless strain of sheep, mainly of the Leicester breed, which has been crossed, years back, by an imported Scotch ram of one of the horned, courageous, upland, black-faced varieties. The effect of this hardy cross had apparently all been bred out, save for an added stamina in the resulting stock, which was uniformly white and hornless. When, therefore, a lamb was born with black face and blackish grey legs, it was cherished as a curiosity; and when in time it developed a splendid pair of horns, it became the handsomest ram in all the valley and a source of great pride to its owner. But when black-faced lambs began to grow common in the hornless and immaculate flocks, the feeling of the valley-folk changed, and word went round that the strain of the white-faced must be kept pure. Then it was decreed that the great horned ram should no longer sire the flocks, but be hurried to the doom of his kind and go to the shambles.

Just at this time, however, a young farmer from the backwoods settlement over behind Ringwaak chanced to visit the valley. The sheep of his settlement were not only hornless, but small and light-woolled as well; and the splendid horned ram took his fancy. Here was a chance to improve his breed. He bought the ram for what he was worth

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to the butcher, and proudly led him away, over the hills and through the great woods, towards the settlement on the other side of Ringwaak.

The backwood man knew right well that a flock of sheep may be driven, but a single sheep must be led, so he held his new possession securely by a piece of stout rope about ten feet long. For an hour or two the ram followed with an exemplary docility quite foreign to his independent spirit. He was subdued by the novelty of his surroundings—the hillocky, sloping pastures, the shadowy solemnity of the forest. Moreover, he perceived in his dim way a kind of mastery in this heavy-booted, home-spun-clad, tobacco-chewing, grave-eyed man from the backwoods, and for a long time he felt none of his usual pugnacity. But by and by the craving for freedom began to stir in his breast, and the blood of his hill-roving ancestor thrilled towards the wild pastures. The glances which from time to time he cast upon the backwoodsman at the other end of the rope became wary, calculating, and hostile. This stalwart form, striding before him, was the one barrier between himself and freedom. Freedom was a thing of which he knew, indeed, nothing—a thing which, to most of his kind, would have seemed terrifying rather than alluring. But to him, with that inherited wildness stirring in his blood, it seemed the thing to be craved before all else.

Presently they came to a little cold spring, bubbling up beside the road and tinkling over the steep bank. The road at this point ran along a hillside, and the slope below the road was clothed with blueberry and other dense shrubs. The backwoodsman was hot and thirsty. Flinging aside his battered hat, he dropped down on hands and knees beside the spring and stooped his lips to the water.

"He crouched for some moments, snarling viciously."

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In this position, still holding the rope in a firm grasp, he had his back to the ram. Moreover, he no longer looked either formidable or commanding. The ram saw his chance. A curious change came over his mild, yellow eyes. They remained yellow, indeed, but became cold, sinister, almost cruel in their expression.

The backwoodsman, as he drank, held a tight grip on the rope. The ram settled back slightly, till the rope was almost taut. Then he launched himself forward. His movement was straight and swift, as if he had been propelled by a gigantic spring. His massive, broad-horned forehead struck the stooping man with terrific force.

With a grunt of pain and amazement, the man shot sprawling over the bank, and landed, half-stunned, in a clump of blueberry scrub. Dazed and furious, he picked himself up, passed a heavy hand across his scratched, smarting face, and turned to see the ram disappearing among the thickets above the road. His disappointment so overcame his wrath that he forgot to exercise his vigorous backwoods vocabulary, and resumed his homeward way with his head full of plans for the recapture of his prize.

The ram, meanwhile, trailing the length of rope behind him, was galloping madly through the woods. He was intoxicated with his freedom. These rough, wild, lonely places seemed to him his home. With all his love for the wilderness, the instinct which had led him to it was altogether faulty and incomplete. It supplied him with none of the needful forest lore. He had no idea of caution. He had no inkling of fear. He had no conception of the enemies that might lurk in thicket or hollow. He went crashing ahead as if the green world belonged to him, and cared not who might hear the brave sound of his going. Now and then he stepped on the rope and stumbled, but that was a small matter.

Through dark strips of forest, over rocky, tangled spaces, across slopes of burnt barren, his progress was always upward, until, having traversed several swampy vales and shadowy ravines, towards evening he came out upon the empty summit of Ringwaak. On the topmost hillock he took his stand proudly, his massive head and broad, curled horns in splendid relief against the amber sky.

As he stood surveying his new realm, a low bleat came to him from a sheltered hollow close by, and looking down he saw a small white ewe with a new-born lamb nursing under her flank. Here was his new realm peopled at once. Here were followers of his own kind. He stepped briskly down from his hillock and graciously accepted the homage of the ewe, who snuggled up against him as if afraid at the loneliness and the coming on of night. All night he slept beside the mother and her young in the sheltered hollow, and kept no watch, because he feared no foe. But the ewe kept watch, knowing well what perils might steal upon them in the dark.

As it chanced, however, no midnight prowler visited the top of Ringwaak, and the first of dawn found the great ram again at his post of observation. It is possible that he had another motive besides his interest in his new, wonderful world. He may have expected the woodsman to follow and attempt his recapture, and resolved not to be taken unawares. Whatever his motive, he kept his post till the sun was high above the horizon, and the dew-wet woods gleamed as if sown with jewels. Then he came down and began to feed with the ewe, cropping the short, thin grass with quick bites, and finding it far more sweet than the heavy growths of his old pasture.

Late in the morning, when pasturing was over for the time, the ram and the little ewe lay down in the shade of a steep rock, comfortably chewing their cud, while the lamb slept at its mother's side. The ram, deeply contented, did not observe two grey-brown, stealthy forms creeping along the slope, from bush to rock, from stump to hillock. But the ewe, ever on the watch, presently caught sight of them and sprang to her feet with a snort of terror. She knew well enough what a lynx was. Yet for all her terror she had no thought of flight. Her lamb was too young to flee, and she would stay by it in face of any fate.

The ram got up more slowly, turned his head, and eyed the stealthy strangers with grave curiosity. Curiosity, however, changed into hostility as he saw by the ewe's perturbation that the strangers were foes; and that sinister glitter came into the great gold eyes which shone so brilliantly from his black face.

Seeing themselves discovered, the two lynxes threw aside their cunning and rushed ravenously upon what they counted easy prey. They knew something of the timorous hearts of sheep and had little expectation of resistance. But being, first of all, hungry rather than angry, they preferred what seemed easiest to get. It was upon the

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lamb and the ewe that they sprang, ignoring the ram contemptuously.

One thing which they had not reckoned with, however, was the temper of the ewe. Before one fierce claw could reach her lamb, she had butted its assailant so fiercely in the flank that he forgot his purpose and turned with a snarl of rage to claw her. Meanwhile, the other lynx, springing for her neck, had experienced the unexpected. He had been met by the lightning charge of the ram, fair in the ribs, and hurled sprawling into a brittle, pointed tangle of dead limbs sticking up from the trunk of a fallen tree.

Having delivered this most effective blow, the ram stepped back a pace or two, mincing on his slender feet, and prepared to repeat it. The lynx was struggling frantically among the branches, which stuck into him and tore his fine fur. Just in time to escape the second assault, he got free; but he got free not for fight, but for flight. One tremendous, wildly contorted leap landed him on the other side of the dead tree; and, thoroughly cowed, he scurried away down the hillside.

The ram at once turned his attention to the ewe and her antagonist. But the second lynx, who had not found his task as simple as he had expected it to be, had no stomach left for one more difficult. The ewe was bleeding about the head, and would, of course, if she had been left to fight it out, have been worsted in a very short time. But the enemy had felt the weight of her blows upon his ribs and had learned his lesson. For just a fraction of a second he turned and defied the ram with a screeching snarl. But when that horned, black, battering head pitched forward at him, he bounded aside like a furry, grey ball and clambered to the top of the rock. Here he crouched for some moments, snarling viciously, his tufted ears set back against his neck, his stump of a tail twitching with rage, while the ram minced to and fro beneath him, stamping defiance with his dainty hoofs. All at once the big cat doubled upon itself, slipped down the other side of the rock, and went gliding away through the stumps and hillocks like a grey shadow; and the ram, perhaps to conceal his elation, fell to grazing as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened. The ewe, on the other hand, seeing the danger so well past, took no thought of her torn face, but set herself to comfort and reassure the trembling lamb.

After this, through the slow, bright hours, while the sun swung hotly over Ringwaak, the ram and his little family were undisturbed. An eagle, wheeling, wheeling, wheeling in the depths of the blue, looked down and noted the lamb. But he had no thought of attacking so well-guarded a prey. The eagle had a wider outlook than others of the wild kindred, and he knew from of old many matters which the lynxes of Ringwaak had never learned till that day.

There were other visitors that came and glanced at the little family during the quiet content of their cud-chewing. A weasel ran restlessly over the hillock and peered down upon them with hard, bright eyes. The big ram, with his black face and huge, curling horns, was a novel phenomenon, and the weasel disappeared behind the hillock, only to appear again much nearer, around a clump of weeds. His curiosity was mingled with malicious contempt, till the ram chanced to rise and shake his head. Then the weasel saw the rope that wriggled from the ram's neck. Was it some new and terrible kind of snake? The weasel respected snakes when they were large and active; so he forgot his curiosity and slipped away from the dangerous neighbourhood.

The alarm of the weasel, however, was nothing to that of the wood-mice. While the ram was lying down, they came out of their secret holes and played about securely, seeming to realise that the big animal's presence was a safeguard to them. But when he moved, and they saw the rope trail sinuously behind him through the scant grass, they were almost paralysed with panic. Such a snake as that would require all the wood-mice on Ringwaak to assuage his appetite. They fairly fell backward into their burrows, where they crouched quivering in the darkest recesses, not daring to show nose again for hours.

Neither weasel nor wood-mice, nor the chick-adees which came to eye him saucily, seemed to the big ram worth a moment's attention. But when a porcupine, his quills rattling and bristling till he looked as big around as a half-bushel basket, strolled aimlessly by, the ram was interested and rose to his feet. The little, deep-set eyes of the porcupine passed over him with supremest indifference, and their owner began to gnaw at the bark of a hemlock-sapling which grew up at one side of the rock. To this gnawing he devoted his whole attention, with an eagerness that would have led one to think he was hungry, as, indeed, he was, not having had a full meal for nearly half an hour. The porcupine, of all Nature's

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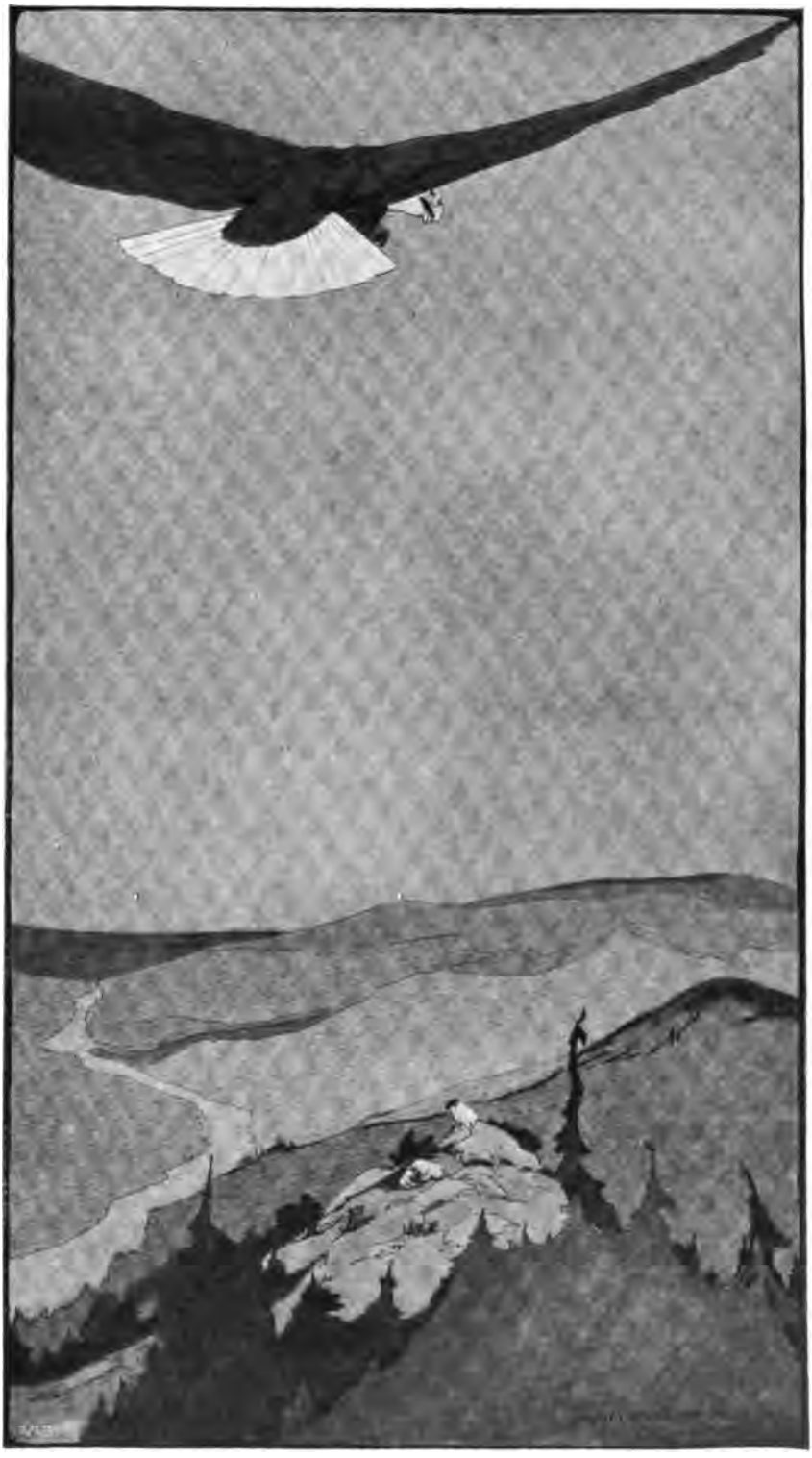

"An eagle, wheeling, wheeling, wheeling in the depths of the blue."

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children, is the best provided for, having food he loves lying about him at all seasons. Yet he is for ever eating, as if famine were in ambush for him just over the next hillock.

Seeing the high indifference of this small, bristling stranger, the ram stepped up and was just about to sniff at him inquiringly. Had he done so, the result would have been disastrous. He would have got a slap in the face from the porcupine's active and armed tail; and his face would have straightway been transformed into a sort of anguished pincushion, stuck full of piercing, finely barbed quills. He would have paid dear for his ignorance of woodcraft—perhaps to the loss of an eye, or even to starvation from a quill working through into his gullet. But, fortunately for him, the ewe understood the peculiarities of porcupines. Just in time she noted his danger and rudely butted him aside. He turned upon her in a fume of amazed indignation; but in some way she made him understand that the porcupine was above all law and not to be trifled with even by the lords of the wilderness. Very sulkily he lay down again; and the porcupine went on chiselling hemlock bark, serenely unconscious of the anger in the inscrutable, yellow eyes that watched him from the ram's black face.

When the shadows grew long and luminous towards evening, the ram, following some unexplained instinct, again mounted the topmost point of Ringwaak and stood like a statue gazing over the vast, warm-coloured solitude of his new domain. His yellow eyes were placid with great content. A little below him, the white lamb wabbling on weak legs at her side, the ewe pastured confidently, secure in the proved prowess of her protector. As the sun dropped below the far-off western rim of the forest, it seemed as if one wide wave of lucent rose-violet on a sudden flooded the world. Everything on Ringwaak—the ram's white fleece, the grey, bleached stumps, the brown hillocks, the green and juniper clumps and poplar saplings—all took a palpitating, aërial stain. Here and there in the distance the coils of the river gleamed clear gold; and overhead, in the hollow amber-and-lilac arch of sky, the high-wandering night-hawks swooped with the sweet twang of smitten strings.

Down at the foot of the northern slope of Ringwaak lay a dense cedar-swamp. Presently, out from the green fringe of the cedars a bear thrust his head and cast a crafty glance about the open. Seeing the ram on the hilltop, the ewe with her lamb feeding near by, he sank back noiselessly into the covert of the cedars and stole around towards the darkening eastern slope, where a succession of shrubby copses ran nearly to the top of the hill.

The bear was lank, rusty-coated, old, and hungry. And he loved sheep. He was an adept in stalking this sweet-fleshed, timorous quarry and breaking its neck with a well-directed blow as it dashed past him in a panic. Emerging from the swamp, he crept up the hill, taking cunning advantage of every bush, stump, and boulder. For all his awkward-looking bulk, he moved as lightly as a cat, making himself small, twisting and flattening and effacing himself; and never a twig was allowed to snap, a stone to clatter, under his broad, unerring feet.

About this time it chanced that the backwoodsman, who had been out nearly all day hunting for his lost prize, approached the edge of the forest at the other side of Ringwaak and saw the figure of the ram against the sky. Then, seeing also the ewe with the lamb beside her, he knew that the game was his.

Below the top of the hill there was not a scrap of cover for a distance of perhaps twenty paces. The bear crept to the very last bush, the ram being occupied with the world at a distance, and the ewe busy at her pasturing. Behind the bush—a thick, spreading juniper—the bear crouched motionless for some seconds, his little, red eyes aglow and his jaws beginning to slaver with eagerness. Then, selecting the unconscious ewe because he knew she was not likely to desert the lamb, he rushed upon his intended victim.

The ewe, as it chanced, was about thirty-five or forty feet distant from the enemy, as he plunged out, black and appalling, from behind the juniper. At the same time, the ram was not more than twenty or twenty-five feet distant, straight above the lamb, in a direction at right angles to the path of the bear. The ewe looked up with a startled bleat, wheeled, sprang nimbly before the lamb, and faced her doom with dauntless, lowered front.

The ram's mild gaze changed in a flash to one of cold, yellow savagery at the sight of the great black beast invading his kingdom. Down went his conquering head. For just a fraction of a second his sturdy body sagged back, as if he were about to sit down. This, so to speak, was the bending of the bow. Then he launched himself straight down the

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slope, all his strength, his weight, and the force of gravity combining to drive home that mighty stroke.

The bear had never, in all his experience with sheep, encountered one whose resistance was worth taking into account. The defiance of the ewe was less than nothing to him. But as he saw, from the corner of his eye, this white bulk plunging down upon him, he hesitated and half turned, with huge paw upraised for a finishing blow.

He turned not quite in time, however, and his defence was not quite strenuous enough for the emergency. He struck like lightning, as a bear always can; but just before the stroke could find its mark, the ram's armed forehead crashed into his ribs.

The blow, catching him as it did, was irresistible. His claws tore off a patch of wool and skin, and ploughed red furrows across the ram's shoulder, but the next instant he was sprawling, his breath jarred from his lungs, against a stump some ten feet down the slope.

As the bear struggled to his feet, furious, but half-daunted with amazement, the ram danced backward a pace or two on his dainty feet, as if showing off, and then delivered his second charge. The bewildered bear was again caught unready, irresolute as to whether he should fight or flee; and again he was knocked headlong a yard or two further down the slope. His was not the dauntless spirit that most of his kindred would have shown in such a case, and he would willingly have made his escape at once if he had seen his way quite clear to do so. But at this moment, while he hesitated, he heard a man's voice shouting loudly, and saw the tall backwoodsman running towards him up the hill. This sight turned his alarm into a blind panic. His feet seemed to acquire wings as he tore madly away among the thickets.

"Then the weasel saw the rope."

The woodsman had seen the whole incident, and was wild with enthusiasm over the prowess of his prize. Bears were the most dreaded scourge of the settlement sheep-farmers, but now, as he proudly said to himself, he had a ram that "could lick a b'ar silly!" He had made a wise purchase, indeed, when he saved that splendid beast from the butcher.

Hearing the man's voice, the ram had halted in dismay just when he was about to charge the bear a third time. He had no mind to go again into captivity. But, on the other hand, for all his lordliness of spirit,

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he felt that a man was his master. At first he lowered his head threateningly, as if about to attack; but when the backwoodsman shouted at him, there was an authority in those tones which he could not withstand, and he sullenly drew aside. With a good-natured laugh, the man picked the lamb up in his arms, whereupon the mother stepped timidly to his side, evidently having no fear. The man rubbed her nose kindly and stroked her ears, and gave her something from his pocket which she ate greedily; and as the ram looked on, the anger gradually faded out from his yellow eyes. At last the man turned and walked slowly down the hill, carrying the lamb. The ewe followed, crowding as close to him as she could, and stumbling as she went because her eyes were fixed upon her little one.

The ram hesitated. He looked at the hillside, the woods, the sky beginning to chill with the onrush of twilight. Then he looked at the retreating figures. Suddenly he saw his world growing empty and desolate. With an anxious bleat, he trotted after the ewe and took his docile place a few feet behind the man's heels. The man looked over his shoulder, and a smile of pleasure softened his rugged face. In a few moments the little procession disappeared in the woods, moving towards the settlement; and Ringwaak Hill was left solitary in the dusk, with the lonely notes of the night-hawks twanging over it.

"The little procession."

JOHN-A-DREAMS.

I dreamed I was the sexton of the church,
And there were wide pink bows on every door.
I said I would untie the silly bows,
And then, I'd not be sexton any more.

I dreamed that there were bottles in a row,
With paper flowers on the pulpit stair;
I took the sexton's broom in sermon time,
And brushed them with a clatter off from there.

Then they all yelled I was a wicked thing.
They shouted, and they drove me from the room.
I had forgotten to put on my clothes,
So off I flew upon the sexton's broom,
Up to the highest rafters of the ceiling,
With such a birdlike and triumphant feeling.

FLORENCE WILKINSON.

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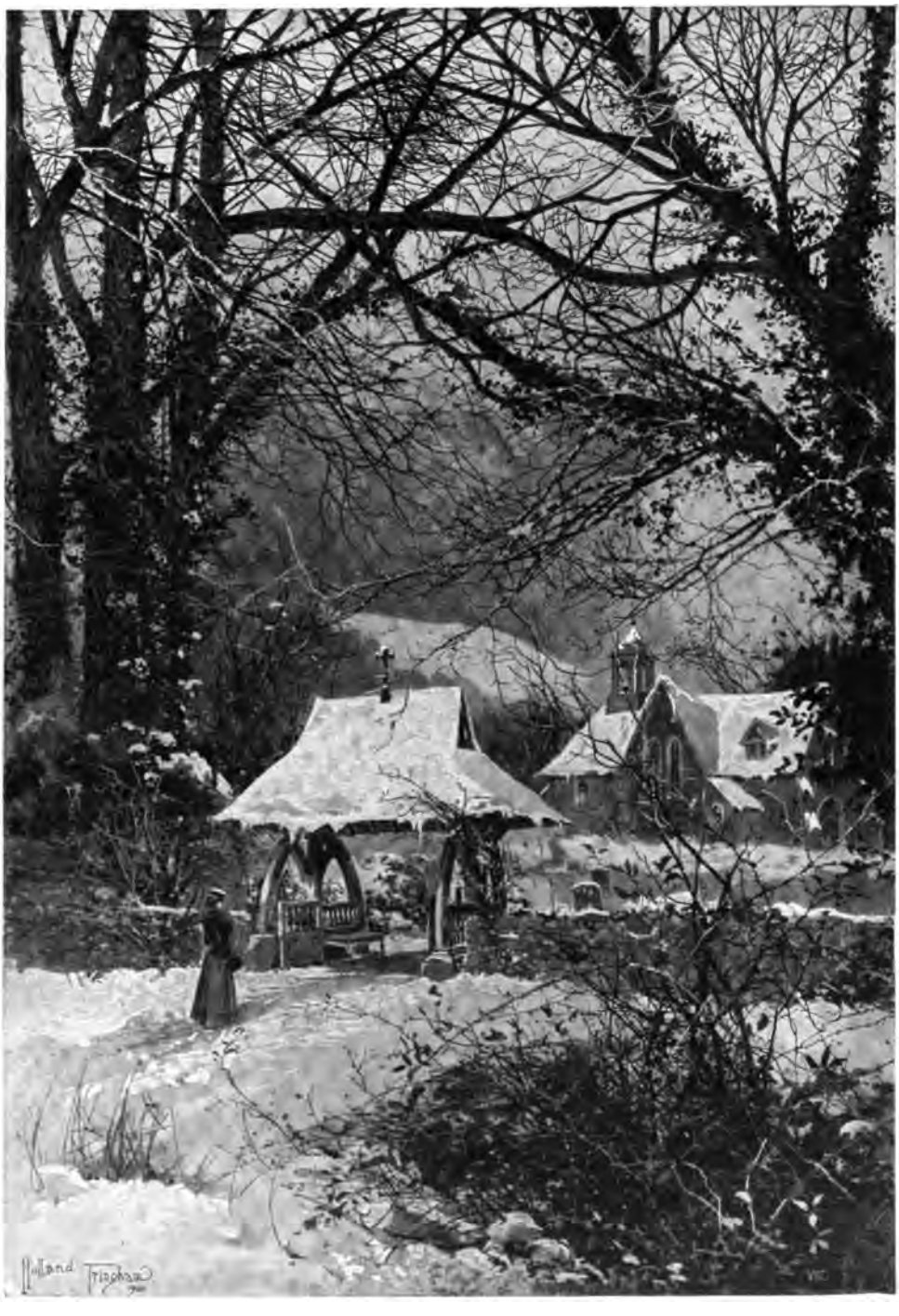

THE LYCH-GATE IN WINTER.

By Holland Tringham.

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THE CAREER OF JOAN CARTHEW:

THE ADVENTURES OF A GIRL WHO HAD NOTHING AND WANTED EVERYTHING.

By Mrs. C. N. WILLIAMSON.*

No. IV.—THE WOMAN WHO KNEW.

JOAN went straight from Cornwall to London and the Bloomsbury boarding-house in which some of her curiously earned money was invested. All was to begin over again now; but to the girl this idea brought inspiration rather than discouragement, for the world was still her oyster, if she could open it, and experience had already taught her some dexterity in the use of the knife. At this house in Woburn Place she had the right to live without paying, while she "looked round," and Miss Witts, who owed her present position to Joan, was only too delighted to welcome her benefactress.

The place was doing well, and the corner of difficulty had been turned, was the news the manager-housekeeper had to give Joan. Every room but one was full, and so far the boarders seemed to be "good pay," with perhaps a single exception.

"There's only the little top floor back that's empty," cheerfully went on Miss Witts. "Of course, I will take that and give you up mine."

"You'll do nothing of the sort, my dear woman," said Joan. "I like running up and down stairs. It does me good. Besides, I'd rather be at the back. There's a tree, or something that once tried hard to be a tree, to look at, as I know well, for the room used to be mine; so there's no use talking any more about that matter—it's settled. You stay where you are, and I will rise, like cream, to the top. Now tell me about this doubtful person you are afraid won't pay. Is it a man or a woman?"

"A woman," replied Miss Witts, "and one of the strangest beings I ever saw. It is a great comfort to me that you are here, miss, for you can decide what is to be done about her. She hasn't paid her board for a fortnight, but she keeps pleading that as soon as she is well, and can go out, she will get remittances which have been delayed."

"Oh, she is ill, then?"

"So she says. But I am not sure, miss, it isn't just an excuse to work upon my compassion, for why should she have to go out for remittances? She stops in her room, lying upon a sofa, and makes a deal of bother with her meals being carried up so many pairs of stairs, though it's hardly worth while her having them at all, she eats so little. Yet she doesn't look a bit different from what she did when she was supposed to be well and going about as much like anybody else as one of her sort could *ever* do."

"What do you mean?" asked Joan, whose curiosity was fired.

"Only that she is, and was, more a ghost than a human being, with her great, hollow, black eyes, like burning coals, set deep under her thick eyebrows and overhanging forehead; with her thin cheeks—why, miss, they almost meet in the middle—her yellow-white skin, her tall, gliding figure and stealthy way of walking, so that you never hear a sound till she's at your back."

"Queer kind of boarder," commented Joan.

"That she is, miss; and when she applied for a room, I would have said we were full up, but in those days we had several of our best rooms empty, and, strange as she was, her clothes were so good, and the luggage on the four-wheeler waiting outside was so promising, as you might say, that it did seem a pity to send away two guineas a week because Providence had given it a scarecrow face. So I showed her the best back room on the top floor——"

"Next to mine," cut in Joan.

"If you will have it so, miss; and there she's been for the last six weeks, not having paid a penny since the end of the first month."

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"What is the ghost's name and age?" the girl went on with her catechism.

"Her name, if one was to take her word, which I'm far from being certain of, is Mrs. Gone; and as for her age, miss, she might be almost anywhere between fifty and a hundred."

"What a clever old lady!" laughed the girl. "Well, we can't turn the poor wretch away while she's ill, if she *is* ill, can we? I know too well what it is to be alone in the world and down on your luck, to be hard on anybody else, especially a woman. We must give Mrs. Gone the benefit of the doubt for a little while. But your description has quite interested me; I should like to see this ghost who doesn't walk."

"After lighting the shaded lamp."

"The house is the same as yours, miss," said Miss Witts. "You have the right to go into her room at any time, more particularly as she hasn't paid for it."

"Perhaps I'll carry up her dinner this evening, by way of an excuse," returned Joan—"if you think she could bear the shock of seeing a strange face."

Upon this, Miss Witts, who adored the girl, protested that, in her opinion, the sight of such a face could only be a pleasure to any person and in any circumstances. Joan laughed at the compliment, but she did not forget her intention. Mrs. Gone's meals were usually taken up a few minutes before the gong summoned the guests to the dining-room, because it was easier to spare a servant then than later, and it was just after the dressing-bell had rung that the girl knocked at the "ghost's" door.

Joan was surprised to find her heart quickening its beats as she waited for a bidding to "Come in!" One would think that a sight of this old woman who would not pay her board was an exciting event! She smiled at herself, but the smile faded as she threw open the door in answer to a faint murmur on the other side. Miss Witts' sketch of Mrs. Gone had not been an exaggeration.

There she lay on a sofa by the window, her face gleaming white in the twilight; and it was a wonderful face. A shiver went creeping up and down Joan's spine, as a flame leaped out from the shadowy hollows of two sunken eyes to hers.

"This woman has been someone in particular—someone extraordinary," the girl thought quickly; and as politely as if she had addressed a duchess, she explained her intrusion. "The servants were busy, and I offered to carry up your dinner," Joan said. "I arrived only to-day; and as Miss Witts looks upon me as a sort of proprietor, she told me how ill you have been. I hope you are better."

The old woman with the strange face looked steadily at the beautiful girl in the pretty, simple, evening frock which was to grace the boarding-house dinner. "Did Miss Witts tell you nothing else?" she asked, in a voice which would have made the fortune of a tragic actress in the death scene of some aged queen.

"She told me that she was afraid you

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were in trouble," promptly answered Joan, who had her own way of dressing the truth. By this time the girl had entered the room, set the tray on a table near the sofa, and taking a rose from her bodice, laid it on the pile of plates. This she did on the impulse of the moment, not with a preconceived idea of effect, and she was rewarded by a slight softening of the tense muscles round the once handsome mouth.

"I hope you like roses?" she asked.

"Yes," Mrs. Gone answered brusquely. "Why do you give it to me?"

"Because I'm sorry you are ill, and perhaps lonely," said Joan, able for once to account for an action without a single mental reserve. "I have had a good deal of worry in my life, and can sympathise with others, as I told Miss Witts when she spoke of you. One reason why I came was to say that you needn't distress yourself about your indebtedness to this house. Try to get well, and pay at your convenience. You shall not be pressed."

Joan had not meant to say all this when she arranged to have a sight of Mrs. Gone. She had merely wished to satisfy her curiosity; but now she felt impelled to utter these words of encouragement—why, she did not know, for she had not conceived any sudden fancy for the sinister old woman. On the contrary, the white face, with its burning eyes and secretive mouth, inspired her with something like fear. A woman with such a face could not have many sweet, redeeming graces of character or heart. There was, to supersensitive nerves, an atmosphere of evil as well as mystery about her; but though Joan felt this, it gave a keener edge to her interest.

"Thank you," said Mrs. Gone. "You are kind, as well as pretty. I do not like young people usually, but I might learn to like you. I hope you will come again."

The words were a dismissal and a comment. Joan accepted them as both. She promised to repeat her visit, and after lighting the shaded lamp on the table, left Mrs. Gone to eat her dinner.

The girl would have given much to lift the veil of mystery so closely wrapped about this woman's past and personality. She even boasted to herself that she would find some way, sooner or later, at least to peep under its edge; but day after day passed, and though she went often to Mrs. Gone's room, and was always thanked for her kind attentions, she seemed no nearer to attaining her object than at first. Beyond occupying a room which she did not pay for, Mrs. Gone was not an expensive guest. She ate almost nothing; and when Joan had been in Woburn Place for a week, the white face with its burning eyes had become so drawn with suffering that in real compassion the girl offered to call a doctor at her own expense. But Mrs. Gone would not consent. "I hate doctors," she said. "No one could tell me more about myself than I know."

The girl's own affairs were absorbing enough, for she saw no new opening yet for her ambition; still, she found time to think a great deal about Mrs. Gone. "Am I a soft-hearted idiot, allowing myself to be imposed upon by a professional 'sponge'?" she wondered; "or is there something in my odd feeling that I shall be rewarded for all I do for this extraordinary woman?"

Such questions were passing through her mind one night when she had gone to bed late, after being out at the theatre. She had been in Woburn Place eight days, and was growing impatient, for none of the boarders were of the kind to be used as "stepping-stones," and none of the Society and financial papers, which she studied, afforded any hopeful suggestion for another phase of her career. To be sure, the young man with whom she had consented to go to the theatre was employed as a reporter for a great London daily, and she had been "nice" to him, with the vague idea that she might somehow be able to profit by his infatuation; but at present she did not see her way, and it appeared that she was wasting sweetness on the desert air.

"I suppose," Joan said to herself, turning over her hot pillow, "that if I were an ordinary girl, I might be contented to go on as I am. I can live here for nothing, and get enough interest on the money I've put into this concern to buy clothes and pay my way about, with strict economy. All the men in the house are in love with me; and if they were more interesting, that might be amusing. But I'm not born to be contented with small people or things. I don't want clothes. I want creations. I don't want the admiration of young men from the City. I want to be appreciated by princes. I believe I must have been a princess in another state of existence, for I always feel that the best of everything is hardly good enough for me."

As she thought this, half laughing, there came a sound from the next room—that room which might have been the grave of the strange woman who occupied it, so dead was

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"Joan's instinct led her to look under the pillows on the bed."

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the silence which reigned there day and night. Never before had Joan heard the least noise on the other side of the dividing wall, but now she was startled by a crash as of breaking glass, followed by the dull, soft thud which could only have been made by the fall of a human body. Joan sat up, her heart thumping, and it gave a frightened bound as a groan came brokenly to her ears.

She waited no longer, but slipped her bare feet into a pair of satin *mules*, flung on her dressing-gown, and in another moment was out of her room and in the dark passage, fumbling for the handle of the other door.

Mrs. Gone kept her door unlocked in the daytime, perhaps to save herself the trouble of rising to admit servants, or her only visitor, Joan Carthew; but the girl feared that it might not be so at night, and that before she could penetrate the mystery of the fall and the groan, the whole house would have to be disturbed. She was relieved, therefore, to find that the door yielded to her touch. Pushing it open, she listened for an instant, but only the dead silence throbbed in her ears.

As she got into her dressing-gown, with characteristic presence of mind Joan had caught up a box of matches and put it into her pocket. The room was as dark as the passage outside, and the girl struck a match before crossing the threshold. The little flame leaped and brightened. Something on the floor glimmered white in the darkness, and Joan did not need to bend down to know what it was.

The gas was close to the door, and she lighted it with the dying match, which burnt her fingers. Then she saw clearly what had happened. In tottering uncertainly across the floor, Mrs. Gone had knocked over a small table holding a china candlestick, a water-bottle, and a goblet. She had fallen, and after uttering that one groan which had crept to Joan's ears, she had lost consciousness.

The girl's quick eyes sought for an explanation of the catastrophe. The long, white figure lay at some distance from the bed, and near the mantel. On the mantel stood a curiously shaped, dark green bottle which Joan had once been requested to give to Mrs. Gone. She had seen a few drops of some colourless liquid poured into a wineglass of water; and when it had been swallowed, the ghastly pallor of the face had changed to a more natural tint. Mrs. Gone had then said that she took the medicine when very ill. If she used it oftener, its effect would disappear, and she would have nothing left to turn to at the worst.

"It was that bottle she was trying to find in the dark," Joan guessed. "She must have been too ill to try and light the gas. Now, how much was it that I saw her pour out? It might have been ten drops—no more."

So thinking, the girl filled a glass on the wash-handstand a third full of water, measured ten drops of the medicine with a steady hand, and raising Mrs. Gone's head, put the tumbler to her lips. The strong teeth seemed clenched, but some of the liquid must have passed their barrier, for the dark eyes opened wide and looked up into Joan's face.

"Too late——" the woman panted, with a gurgling in the throat which choked her words. "Dying—now. Wish that—you—you have been kind—only one in the world. My secret—you might have—Lord Northmuir would have given——"

The voice trailed away into silence. The gurgle died into a rattle; the woman's breast heaved and was still. Her eyes had not closed, but though they stared into Joan's, the spark of life behind their windows had gone out. Mrs. Gone was dead, and had taken her secret with her into the unknown.

Joan had never seen death before, but there was no mistaking it. Her first impulse was to run downstairs, call Miss Witts and a young doctor who had his office and bedroom on the dining-room floor. Nevertheless, when she had laid the heavy head gently down and sprung to her feet, she remained standing.

For some minutes she stood motionless, almost rigid, her lips pressed together, her eyes hard and bright. Then she struck one hand lightly upon the other, exclaiming half aloud: "I'll do it!"

It seemed certain by this time that no one had heard the crash of glass and the fall which had alarmed her, for the house was still. Nevertheless, Joan tiptoed to the door and bolted it. When she had done this, she opened all the drawers of the dressing-table and searched them carefully for papers. Discovering none, she left everything exactly as she had found it. Next she examined the pockets of the three or four dresses hanging in the wardrobe, but they were limp and empty. There were still left the leather portmanteau and handbag which had appealed to Miss Witts' respectful admiration. Both were locked, but Joan's instinct led her to look under the pillows on the bed, and there lay a key-ring. She was able to open portmanteau and bag, but not a paper of any kind was to be seen, and the girl recalled a

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remark of Miss Witts', that never since Mrs. Gone had become a boarder in Woburn Place had she been known to receive or send a letter.

Having assured herself that no information was to be gained among the dead woman's possessions, Joan unlocked the door and went softly downstairs to rouse Miss Witts. She justified what she had done by reason of Mrs. Gone's last words, for she believed that the dead woman would have made her a present of the secret if she could.

* * * * *

Awakened and informed of what had happened, the housekeeper called the doctor, who looked at the body and certified that death had resulted from failure of the heart, which must have been long diseased. Joan paid for a good oak coffin and a decent funeral. She bought a grave at Kensal Green and ordered a neat stone to be erected. If she had previously earned Mrs. Gone's gratitude, she felt that she had now merited any reward which might accrue in future, and the curious, erasible tablet that did duty as her conscience was wiped clear.

The morning after Mrs. Gone's funeral, the girl put on her favourite frock of grey cloth, with a hat to match, which had been bought at two of the most fashionable shops in Monte Carlo. This costume, with grey gloves, grey shoes, and a grey chiffon parasol, ivory-handled, gave Joan an air of quiet smartness, a combination particularly appropriate for the adventure which she had planned. She hired a decorous brougham and said to the coachman: "Drive to Northmuir House, Belgrave Square."

It was but ten o'clock, and, as Joan had gleaned some information concerning the habits of the occupant, she was confident that he would be at home. Mrs. Gone had not been dead two hours when the girl was searching through her own scrap-book, compiled of cuttings taken from Society papers. Whenever she came across the description of any important member of the aristocracy—his or her home life, manners, fancies, and ways—she cut it out and pasted it into this book, in case it should become valuable for reference. The moment that the dying woman uttered the name of Northmuir, Joan's memory jumped to a paragraph (one of the first that had gone into the scrap-book), and as soon as she could shut herself up in the little back room, she had consulted her authority.

The Earl of Northmuir was, according to the paper from which the cutting had been clipped, still the handsomest man in England, though now long past middle age. Once he had been the most popular also, but for some years he had lived more or less in retirement, owing to illness and family bereavements, seldom leaving his fine old town house in Belgrave Square.

"He'll be in London, and he won't be the sort of man to go out before noon," Joan said to herself.

Her heart was beating more quickly than usual, but her beautiful face was calm and untroubled, as she stood on the great porch at Northmuir House, asking a footman in sober livery if Lord Northmuir were at home.

The girl in the exquisite grey dress and grey hat, with large, soft ostrich feathers, might have been a young princess. Whatever she was, she merited civility, and the servant, who could not wholly conceal surprise, politely invited her to enter, while he inquired if his Lordship could receive a visitor. "What name shall I say?" he asked.

"Give him this, please," said Joan, handing the footman an envelope, addressed to "The Right Honble. the Earl of Northmuir." Inside this envelope was a sheet of paper, blank, save for the words, "A messenger from Mrs. Gone, who is dead"; and the death notice was enclosed.

With this envelope the man went away, leaving her to wait in a large and splendid drawing-room, where stiffness of arrangement betrayed the absence of a woman's taste.

Joan looked about appreciatively, yet critically. Then, when she had gained an impressionist picture of the room, she glanced at the jewelled watch on her wrist, a present from Lady John Bevan after the sale of the *Titania*.

What if Lord Northmuir had never known the dead woman under the name of Gone? What if—there were many things which might go wrong, and Joan had put her whole stake on a single chance. If she had been mistaken—but as her mind played among surmises, the footman returned.

"His Lordship will see you in his study, if you will kindly come this way," the servant announced.

Joan rose with quiet dignity and followed the man along a pillared hall to a closed door. "The lady, my lord," murmured the footman, in opening it. Joan was left alone with a singularly handsome old man, who sat in a huge cushioned chair by the fireplace. It was summer still, but a fire of ship-logs sparkled with changing rainbow lights on

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the stone hearth. In a thin hand, Lord Northmuir held an exquisitely bound book. He must have been more than sixty, but his features were of the cameo-fine, classic cut, of which the beauty, like that of old marble, never dies, and it was easy to see why he had once borne a reputation as the handsomest man in England. It was easy to see also, by his eyes as they noted each item of Joan's beauty, that he had been a gallant man, not blind to the charms of women. Nevertheless, his voice was cold as he spoke to the unexpected visitor.

"I haven't the pleasure of knowing your name, or why you have honoured me by calling," he said. "Forgive my not rising. I am rather an invalid. Pray sit down. There is something I can do for you?"

"An expression of horror and surprise passed over Lord Northmuir's handsome face."

"Several things, Lord Northmuir," returned the girl, taking the chair his gesture had indicated.

"You will tell me what they are?"

"I am anxious to do so. In the first place, I wish to be a relation of yours, and not a poor relation. I wish to have a thousand pounds a year, either permanently or until my marriage, should I become the wife of a rich man through your introduction."

Lord Northmuir stared at the girl, and if there were not astonishment in his eyes, he was a clever actor. "You are a handsome young woman," he said slowly, when she had finished, "but I begin to be afraid that your mind is unfortunately—er—affected."

"There is a weight upon it," Joan replied "the weight of your secret. It's so heavy that unless you are very kind, I shall be tempted to throw the burden off by laying it upon others."

Now the blood hummed in her ears. If she had built a house of cards, this was the moment when it would topple, and bury her ambition in its ignominious downfall. But Lord Northmuir's slow speech had quickened her hope, for she said to herself that it was not spontaneous; and gazing keenly into his face, she saw the blood rise darkly. She

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had staked on the right chance, yet the risk was not past. Her game was the game of bluff, but its success depended upon the man with whom she had to deal.

"I do not understand what you are talking about," he said.

"I dare say I haven't made my meaning clear," answered Joan, half rising. "Perhaps I'd better explain to my solicitor, and get him to write a letter——"

"You are nothing more nor less than a common blackmailer," Lord Northmuir exclaimed, striking his white hand on the arm of his chair.

"I may be nothing less, but I am a good deal more than a common one," retorted Joan, surer of her ground. "I will prove that, if you force me to do it."

"Who are you?" he broke out desperately.

"I am a Woman Who Knows," she replied. "There was another Woman Who Knew. She called herself Gone. She is dead, and I have come. I have come to stay."

"Don't you understand that I can hand you over to the police?" demanded Lord Northmuir, with difficulty controlling his voice so that it could not be heard by possible listeners outside the door.

"Yes; and I understand that I can hand your secret over to the police. They would know how to use it."

He flushed visibly, and Joan saw that her daring shot had told. For the instant he had no answer ready, and she seized the opportunity to speak again. "You can do better for yourself than hand me over to the police. There need be no trouble, if you will realise that I am not a common person, and not to be treated as such."

"Again I ask: Who are you?" he cried.

Joan risked another shot in the dark. "Can't you make a guess?" she asked, with a malicious suggestion of hidden meaning in her tone.

An expression of horror and surprise passed over Lord Northmuir's handsome face, devastating it as a marching tornado devastates a landscape. It was evident that he had "made a guess," and been thunderstruck by its answer. Joan's curiosity was so strongly roused that it touched physical pain. Almost, she would have been ready to give one of her pretty fingers to know the secret.

"Do you still wish to ask questions?" she inquired.

"Heaven help me, no! What is it that you want?"

"I have told you already. If I insisted on all I have a right to claim, you would not be where you are now."

She watched him. He grew deathly and bowed his white head. Joan felt sorry for the man now that he was at her mercy; but her imagination played with the secret, as a child plays with a prism in the sunshine. Its flashing colours allured her. "Oh! if I only *knew* something," she thought, "something which would hold in law, and could go through the courts, where might I not stand? I might reach one of the highest places a woman can fill. But it's no use; I must take what I can get, and be thankful; and, anyway, I can't help pitying him a little, though I'm sure he doesn't deserve it. He's old and tired, and I won't make him suffer more than is necessary for the game."

Joan again named her terms, this time with much ornamental detail. She was to be a newly discovered orphan cousin from Australia. Her name was to be, as it had been in Cornwall, Mercy Milton. She was to be invited to visit, for an indefinite length of time, at Northmuir House. Her noble relative was to exert himself to the extent of giving entertainments to introduce her to his most influential and highly placed friends. He was also to make her an allowance of a thousand pounds a year.

"Don't think, if you gamble it away as—as the other did, that I will go beyond this bargain, for I will not!" cried Lord Northmuir, with a testy desire to assert himself and show that he was not wholly to be cowed.

"I don't gamble, except with Fate," said Joan.

This exclamation of his explained one or two things which had been dark. She guessed now why Mrs. Gone, evidently used to luxuries, had been reduced to living on the charity of a boarding-house keeper, and why it had been necessary to wait until she should be well enough to go out before she could obtain "remittances."

Having concluded her arrangement with Lord Northmuir, and settled to become his relative and guest, Joan went back in her brougham to Woburn Place. She told Miss Witts that she had been called away, packed her things, left such as she would not want in Belgrave Square in boxes at the boarding-house, delighted the housekeeper with many gifts, and the following morning drove off with a pile of luggage on a cab. Turning the corner of Woburn Place into the next street, she also turned a corner in her career,

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and for the third time ceased to be Joan Carthew.

She had chosen to take up her lately laid down part of Mercy Milton for two reasons. One was, that in this character as she had played it in Cornwall, with meekly parted hair, soft, downcast eyes, simple manners and simple frocks, she was not likely to be recognised by anyone who had known the dashing and magnificent Miss Jenny Mordaunt; while if she should come across Cornish acquaintances, there was nothing in her new position which need invalidate the story of Lady Pendered's gentle sister.

If Lord Northmuir had looked forward with dread to the intrusion of the adventuress whom he was forced to receive, he soon found that, beyond the galling knowledge of his bondage, he had nothing disagreeable to fear. The young cousin from Australia did not attempt to interfere with his habits after he had provided her with acquaintances, who increased after the manner of a "snowball" stamp competition. The two usually lunched and dined together, and—at first—that was all. But Miss Mercy Milton made herself charming at table, never referred by word or look to the loathed secret, and was so tactful that, to his extreme surprise, almost horror, the man found himself looking forward to the hours of meeting. Joan was not slow to see this; indeed, she had been working up to it. When the right time came, she volunteered to help Lord Northmuir with his letters (he had no secretary) and to read aloud. At the end of six months she had become indispensable, and he would have wondered how existence had been possible without his treasure had he dwelt upon the dangerous subject at all. If, however, the blackmailer's instalment in the household had turned out an agreeable disappointment to the blackmailed, it was a disappointment of another kind to the author of the plot. Joan Carthew did not find life in Belgrave Square half as amusing as she had pictured it, and though she was surrounded by luxury which might be hers as long as Lord Northmuir lived, each day she grew more restless and discontented.

She had found society on the Riviera delightful, but the butterfly crowd which fluttered between Nice and Monte Carlo had little resemblance to that with which she came in contact as Lord Northmuir's cousin. Jenny Mordaunt could do much as she pleased—at worst she was put down as a "mad American, my dear"; but Mercy Milton had the family dignity to live up to. Lord Northmuir's adopted relative could not afford to be "cut" by the primmest dowager; and being an ideal, conventional English girl in the best society did not suit Joan's roaming fancies.

It was supposed that she would be Lord Northmuir's heiress; consequently mothers of eligible young men were charming to her, which would have been convenient if Joan had happened to want one of their sons. But not one of the men who sent her flowers and begged for "extras" at dances would she have married if he had been the last existing specimen of his sex. This was annoying, for in planning her campaign, Joan had resolved to marry well and settle satisfactorily for life. Now, however, she found that it was simpler to decide upon a mercenary marriage in the abstract than when it became a personal question.

At the close of a year with Lord Northmuir she had saved seven hundred pounds, and at last, after a sleepless night, she made up her mind to take a step which was, in a way, a confession of failure.

She went to Lord Northmuir's study as usual in the morning, but this time it was not to act as reader or amanuensis.

"It's a year to-day since I came," she said abruptly, with a purposeful look on her face which the man felt was ominous.

"Yes," he answered. "A strange year, but not an unhappy one. What I regarded as a curse has turned out a blessing. I should miss the albatross now if it were to be taken off my neck."

"I'm sorry for that," said Joan, "for the albatross intends to fly away."

"What! You will marry?"

"No. I'm tired of being conventional. I've decided to relieve you of my presence here; and you can forget me, except when, each quarter, you sign a cheque for two hundred and fifty pounds."

Lord Northmuir's handsome face grew almost as white as when she had first announced her claim upon him. "I don't want to forget you. I can't forget you!" he stammered. "If I could, I would publish the whole truth; but that is impossible, for the honour of the name. You have made me fond of you—made me depend upon you. Why did you do that, if you meant to leave me alone?"

"I didn't mean it at first," replied Joan frankly. "I thought I should be 'in clover' here, and so I have been; but too much clover upsets the digestion. I must go,

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"'By Jove! you shan't leave me like that!'"

Lord Northmuir. I can't stand it any longer. I'm pining for adventures."

"Have you fallen in love?"

"No. I wish I had. I've been trying in vain."

"A year ago I would not have believed it possible that I should make you such an offer, but you have wrought a miracle. You came to blackmail, you remained to bless. Stay with me, my girl, till I die, and not only shall you be remembered in my will, but I will increase your allowance from one thousand to two thousand a year. I can afford to do this, since you have become the one luxury I can't live without."

"I was just beginning to say that, if you would let me go without a fuss, I would take five hundred instead of a thousand a year."

"But now I have shown you my heart, you see that offer does not appeal to me."

Joan broke out laughing; this upsetting of the whole situation was so humorous. A sudden reckless impulse seized her. She could not resist it.

"Lord Northmuir, you will change your mind when I have told you something," she said. "I have played a trick on you. I have no connection with your family, and know no more about your secret than I know what will be in to-morrow's papers. Mrs. Gone, in dying, mentioned a secret and your name. I put two and two together, and they matched so well that I've lived on you for a year, bought lots of dresses, made crowds of friends, had heaps of proposals,

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and kept seven hundred pounds in hand. Now I think you will be willing to let me go; and you can lie easy and live happy for ever after."

Having launched the thunderbolt, she would have left the room, but Lord Northmuir, old and invalided as he was, sprang from his chair like an ardent youth and caught her arm.

"By Jove! you shan't leave me like that!" he cried. "You have made your first mistake, my dear. Instead of being in your power, you have put yourself in mine. I need fear you no longer. But as a trickster I love you no less than I did as a blackmailer. Indeed, I love you the more for your diabolical cleverness, you beautiful wretch! Stay with me, not as the little adopted cousin, living on charity, but as my wife, and mistress of this house. Or, if you will not, I shall denounce you to the police."

For once, Joan was dumfounded. The tables had been turned upon her with a vengeance. She gasped and could not answer.

"You see, it is my turn to dictate terms now," said Lord Northmuir.

Joan's breath had come back. "You are right," she returned, in a meek voice. "I have given you the reins. But—well, it would be something to be Countess of Northmuir."

"Don't hope to be a widowed Countess," chuckled the old man. "I am only sixty-nine, and for the last ten years I have taken good care of myself."

"I count on nothing after this," said Joan.

"You consent, then?"

"How can I do otherwise?"

Lord Northmuir laughed out in his triumph over her. "The notice of the engagement will go to the *Morning Post* immediately," he said. "To-morrow, some of our friends will be surprised."

But it was he who was surprised; for when to-morrow came, Joan had run away.

FOREKNOWLEDGE.

I HEARD the sound of your coming,
All the years before you came;
As a sick man hears, in his darkened room,
The petulant gust of a flame.

I felt the touch of your spirit,
As the woods know the path of the wind;
We walk as friends in an autumn world,
Yet ever a spring behind.

I lived the life you belong to
When that life was a dream as yet;
I hide my eyes from your unseeing eyes,
And marvel you should forget.

I kissed the sword of your silence
In my battles before it fell:
Only the sheath of the veteran's blade
Knows where his old wounds dwell.

I wait for the hour of your blindness
To pass, though the years stretch slow
(Your spirit remembers, all the while:)
You will turn at my touch, and know!

ETHEL M. HEWITT.

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A NIGHT WITH POACHERS

BY S. L. BENSUSAN.

"WELL, it can be done; but you must do as you're told, keep your mouth shut, and look after yourself if need be."

Relieved of some unnecessary oaths, the above is a correct paraphrase of the poacher's final words. He sat on a bank by the wayside, puffing at a short clay pipe, and I sat just above him at the woodside, under the shadow of the beech tree whose leaves were being slowly stripped by the wind.

"That will do," I said rather coldly, for my enthusiasm had waned. "You do your business and I'll do mine."

"All's well," he answered. "Now, you pass here every day. One morning in the next week you'll find this branch broken on the ground. Same evening be at the corner of Rush Lane at nine o'clock, and wait."

He sauntered down the road, and I remained to think the matter over. In a thoughtless, excited moment I had arranged with "Badger" Kemp, the most notorious poacher in Blankshire, to go with him on a big expedition against the rabbits of some neighbour. Terms were, the payment of half a sovereign on my part and strict obedience to orders, an oath of secrecy, and my word of honour to reveal no names. My conscience told me I was about to become *particeps criminis*, but it was too late to draw back. I returned to the house feeling quite uncomfortable. For three days the branch remained intact, on the fourth it lay broken on the ground. I passed a rather restless morning and afternoon after the partridges, missing the easiest shots time out of mind, and getting no little chaff from my friends.

After dinner I excused myself on the plea of a headache and said I was going to bed, climbed down the verandah leading from my window to the ground, and started for Rush Lane.

It was a dark night in late October, moon and stars were conspicuous by their absence, a strong breeze was blowing from the south-west, and the face of the heavens was obscured by clouds. The country in this corner of Blankshire is very well wooded. Scotch fir, pine, beech, and oak are very plentiful; there is abundant cover for game and its foes. As I paused by the corner of the lane, a man came up to me from the darkest corner and said: "Just in time; step out." It was Badger Kemp himself.

The road was fairly broad, with grass paths on either side. We chose the grass and walked steadily along. Where the road turns towards Fleetcombe, a broad path comes from the common to meet it. We stepped on to this path, and behind the first may-thorn bush found a small cart drawn by a half-defined donkey. Two men and a boy were standing by the side.

"Now, nipper, mind you don't go to sleep," said Badger Kemp, emphasising the hint with a threat that does not call for repetition, and then turned back on to the high road, followed by the two men, leaving the lad in charge of the cart. One of the new-comers carried what looked like a mass of netting under his arm; the other, who was strangely corpulent, carried a bundle of sticks and a big bag. The Badger took the bags, and we strode on, keeping our faces to the wind.

Soon I lost count of the roads, and was glad to do so. If I never knew whose land was to suffer, I should not feel as uneasy as I must if I found myself upon the ground of some man whose hospitality I had enjoyed. We walked always in the shadow of the hedge, and once, when the sound of a distant

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"Two men and a boy were standing by."

vehicle was heard, I was guided suddenly into a ditch, where, side by side with the poacher, I watched the yellow lights of the doctor's gig advance, flash upon us in the darkness, and disappear. Happily the doctor was by himself, and was too much occupied with his spirited bay mare to have a sharp eye for the hedges on either side.

"That's a good 'un," whispered one of the two strangers to me. "Cured me o' a bad lung, 'e did; and when I got about, I just chucks a couple o' pheasants into 'is front garden. 'E sends for me. 'Take that stuff away,' he says, givin' 'em back; 'an' if you ever put any o' it over my 'edge, by 'Eavens!' 'e says, 'I'll break yer 'ead, if I 'ave to mend it agen for nought.'"

Badger jumps out. "Cut the cackle and come along," he says curtly, and we all follow. Now the excitement treads upon the heels of uneasiness, and presently something of the poacher's keen enthusiasm fills me, too, though I am a commonplace, law-abiding citizen enough. It is the war of skilled cunning against law and order, a risky war whose ending no man can foresee.

We are coming into thick cover; a gate stands white in the darkness on our right; we clamber over and go slowly along the side of a hedge in the direction from which the wind is coming. Suddenly the hedge ceases and a halt is called. "Start about ten yards up," says the one who has been silent hitherto, "and spread up to the beginning of the lawns. They don't pass here again to-night." As he speaks he picks up a bent twig from the ground and hands it to the Badger. Clearly the poachers have a confederate—whether among the keeper's boys or in the house, it is hard to say, more particularly as I do not even know from whose ground the toll is to be taken.

By this time my eyes have grown sufficiently accustomed to the darkness to discern faintly the shape and direction of the field that is our destination. It has a broad ditch on the side directly on our left—probably a miniature warren—a belt of trees at the far end, a hedge on the right, and an open space on the remaining side.

The man with the net and the man with the poles started their work. The net was of fine, strong thread, about four feet broad, and coloured, Badger Kemp whispered to me, green and brown in alternate lengths of about ten yards. A pole was driven in the ground, the net secured to it at a height of about eighteen inches by the thick whip-cord that hemmed it top and bottom; it was run along for about eight yards, and then another stake was put down. The skill and rapidity with which the work was done astonished me. There was no tangle, no hesitation while some two hundred yards of this fine network were placed in position. We followed quietly along the line; ever and anon Badger Kemp would lie flat on the grass and listen intently. "The rabbits are feeding," he whispered; "their warren's behind us; now they've got to be driven. You just stay with me." By this time the

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last stake had been driven in, the fat man had taken off his coat and was undergoing a transformation. His friend was running round and round him, and at every turn the fat man grew thinner. I stepped quite close and understood the mystery. The corpulent one had yards and yards of thin rope wound round his body. How he had walked and worked seemed beyond the possibilities of explanation. His companion was taking the rope off in lengths that made it easy to carry, and by the time the job was over he who was fat had become quite emaciated.

"We'll drag," said he, drawing a deep breath as though for the first time that evening.

"Yes, do," replied Badger Kemp in the same guarded tone. "I'll wait here with this."

I strongly objected to being summed up as "this," but the moment was not for protests. Two of my three companions were as excited as though they had been drinking heavily; even the Badger was exalted. In this frenzied condition, all three—one a practised poacher, the other two smart pot-house loafers—were quite dangerous, cognisant of the designs that menaced their stock-in-trade and even their liberty, ready to defend either or both without regard to consequences. The two men walked off as though they were returning by the way we came, leaving Badger Kemp with me.

"They're going right away round," he whispered, evidently making an effort to keep his excitement under control. "They'll come back at the far end of the plantation, and walk across the far ends o' the field with the drivin' rope atween them."

Then at once the method of poaching stood revealed. The two would keep the rope on a level with the top of the grass, where countless rabbits would be feeding; these, being frightened, would dash for the burrow at the back of us. Between that and them, covering the whole side of the field, lay the net, with its two-inch mesh and four feet of width lying loose over eighteen inches. It was a neat idea enough. We waited anxiously, listening and straining our eyes in vain endeavour to pierce the mist that was rising from the grass. The silence around was exceedingly profound, no human cry came from the trees or wood, only now and again the falling wind shrilled through the trees. Suddenly an owl hooted in the distance. "They're off," whispered Badger Kemp. "Put your hand on the top line of the net—not heavily—and feel the fish coming." I did as I was told and waited. A moment later the cord thrilled in my hand, slightly at first, and then more heavily. The rabbits had started their stampede, and the advance guard was tumbling headlong into the trap. "Wait here," whispered the poacher, as he flung the bags on the ground; and then he started away down the line without further explanation and soon passed out of sight. I could hear nothing; the wind had dropped, suddenly still; the only signs of the result were to be found in the quivering cord. If you have ever done any deep-sea fishing and have had good sport, the sensation will not be hard to realise. Had the invisible rabbits been cod or conger, my corner a boat, the field the sea, and the long cord a sea-line heavily baited, the result would have been the same to the sense of touch.

"A pole was driven in the ground."

I must have been alone some five minutes when there came from a point somewhere in

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the middle of the net a sudden cry that almost paralysed me. Once it was repeated, and then there was a sound, half sigh, half groan, and a deadly silence. For a moment I stood aghast, and then ran straight for the spot, keeping slightly to the left of the net as far as I could judge by the dim light. Every moment I expected to fall, but I kept my feet. Badger Kemp was on his knees, alone.

"What have you done?" I whispered. "What was that scream?"

He began to chuckle, his nearest approach to a laugh.

"Don't you know a hare when you hear one?" he whispered scornfully, and then my passion, excitement, and firm intent passed suddenly and I felt very foolish.

"Badger would lie flat on the grass and listen."

"So you thought I was killing somebody," he added, handing up a splendid hare which he was taking from the net when I broke upon him. "I knew it was you by the tread, or you wouldn't have found me here."

"Sorry," I said; "but I didn't know you could catch hares. I thought they jumped."

"So they do," he replied. "This one didn't see the net—the brown and green puzzled him. We don't catch one like this in three months, and don't want to. If the wind had been the other way, that call would have knocked at the keeper's window. Now go back and wait where I told you."

I am making no attempt to give the poacher's own words, for they were in the dialect of Blankshire, and freely interspersed with profanity of every description.

I went back along the net to the end, noting the vague outline of more than twenty rabbits caught in the toils. There was no struggling, the net held them fast, and Badger Kemp would pass along in a moment and kill them instantaneously with one jerk of the neck that served to sever the spinal cord. I had to endure another tedious wait before anybody came, and the first arrival was the ex-fat man, who came to my side as suddenly and silently as though he had risen with the mist from the depths of the damp meadow.

"It's good," he said. "But that hare was a pity; might have queered us." The long rope was being dragged along the ground, and he was taking it up as he spoke.

"Where's the other man?" I whispered.

"He's picking them up," was the reply. "Hand me over the bags."

I did as requested, and he, too, moved off into the darkness. I listened anxiously, I might almost say nervously, for sounds, but could hear nothing. Five minutes lengthened into ten, and I knew the men would be returning, for I felt the strain on the net-rope, as the dead rabbits were taken out, coming nearer and nearer. Finally the two cord-runners came through the gloom, each carrying a well-filled sack, and closely followed by Badger Kemp, who was picking up the last rabbits with a dexterity born of long practice.

"How many?" I asked, when the last victim had been picked up and thrown into the sack.

"Three score and two, counting the hare," replied Badger Kemp; "and a good lot—no three of them to a pair. Now, you two, take those along, and I'll get the net up."

The man who carried the rope over his arm threw it on the grass and gave his full assistance to his companion, who struggled with the heavy bags.

"What will they fetch?" I asked him, as he went along the edge of the network drawing up the poles.

"About fifteenpence a pair," he replied; "but that isn't all profit. Or we may clear the bag for thirty shillings to a dealer who asks no questions."

"That isn't a very big night's work, is it," I said, "when you consider the risks?"

"Night's work be blessed!" replied Badger Kemp in a more scornful tone than ever. "That bag had three others in it before we put the rabbits in. The three are at the far end of the line; we want them all

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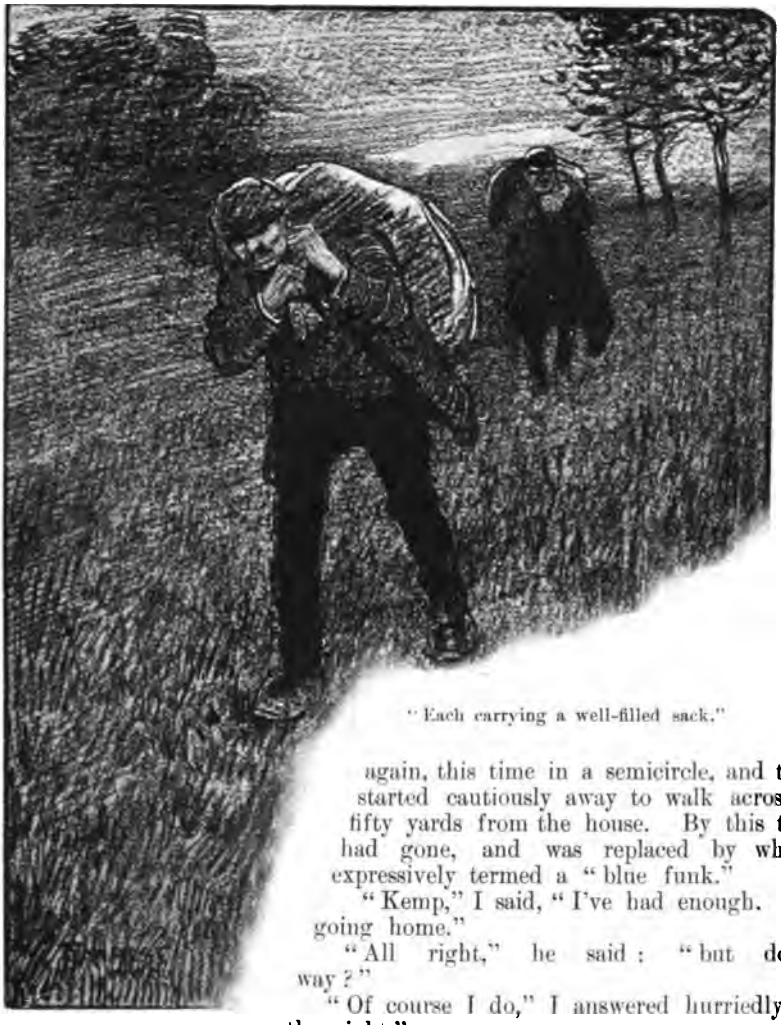
filled before we go back, and then I'll have driven a dozen miles before morning. This is only our first pitch. Wait till the other two come back."

I waited—or, at least, said no more—while the stakes and net were collected and fastened together, as though work were over for the night. We picked up the bags and then returned to the spot where the net had begun and the ex-fat man had thrown the rope down. Presently the men who had taken the bags away reappeared out of the mist as noiselessly as before.

We resumed our walk against the wind and in single file until we turned a corner and saw the distant lights of a house. We walked towards it until with a severe shock I recognised H—— Hall, the residence of a magistrate, an ex-M.F.H., and a man with whom I am slightly acquainted. He is well known as a most strict upholder of the Game Laws, and my courage, like Bob Acres', "oozed out at my fingers' ends."

"We're going to do Foxy's lawns for him," whispered Kemp; "I don't suppose he ever had visitors there before."



"Each carrying a well-filled sack."

I was very uncomfortable. Detection would mean a large measure of disgrace, though my lawyer held a letter explaining what I was going to do, and one of my intimate friends, none other than the nephew of the old gentleman so rudely termed "Foxy," was cognisant of my intention and sworn to secrecy, though I had given him no details. We waited in the shadow of some heavy Scotch firs until, light by light, the Hall retired for the night, and then the net was set again, this time in a semicircle, and the two rope-workers started cautiously away to walk across a lawn less than fifty yards from the house. By this time my excitement had gone, and was replaced by what is vulgarly but expressively termed a "blue funk."

"Kemp," I said, "I've had enough. I'm cold, tired, and going home."

"All right," he said: "but do you know the way?"

"Of course I do," I answered hurriedly; "the drive is on the right."

"That's so," he said, "and so is the keeper's and the lodge-keeper's."

I was silent, fairly baffled.

"Make it another half thick 'un and I'll show you a short cut."

I handed the half-sovereign indicated without a word.

"Quick!" he added. "I must be back before the rabbits." He turned and glided

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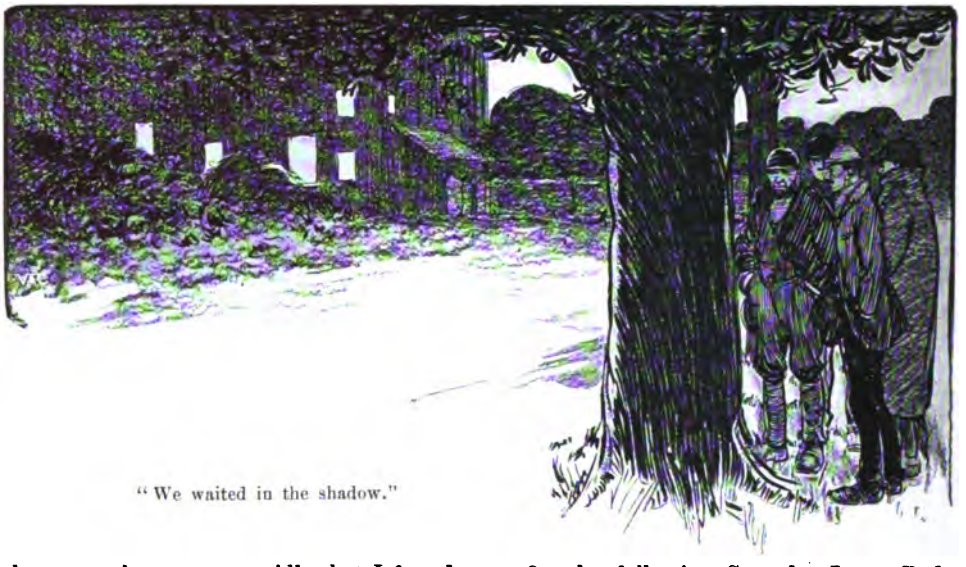

"We waited in the shadow."

back among the trees so rapidly that I found some difficulty in following, and yet so carefully that no twigs snapped. I made little noise, and at last we came out of the copse and to a gate. "That's the mangel patch," he said. "Keep by the wall to the end, cross the ditch, follow the road to the right; and when you get to the bush, get through as quickly as you can, and there's the high road. Keep quiet, and you're all right."

He disappeared, and fifty minutes later I was safely home.

* * * * *

On the following Saturday I met Badger Kemp again, and followed him to a quiet spot by the woodside.

"How many on the night?"

"Two twenty," was the reply.

"Good sport," I remarked.

"Better than the sportsmen, or one of them," he said rudely. "You'll never make a poacher—no nerves and no eye."

With that verdict I am well content, for, though the experience is safely over, I would not have another night with poachers for all the game in the county.

A CONFESSION.

WHEN Great-Aunt Susan is displeased and takes me on her knee,
And tells me of my sinfulness and how she grieves for me,
I feel deep down within my heart angelically good,
And yet I fold my hands and act as if I understood.

But when my mother talks with me by evening candle-light,
And says how dear and sweet I am, and kisses me good-night,
I feel deep down within my heart satanically bad,
And yet I never tell her so, for fear to make her sad.

FLORENCE WILKINSON.

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THE SECRET SOCIETY.

By FRANCIS GRIBBLE.*

THERE is no more mysterious and no more misrepresented society than the Camorra. I never understood its nature or its objects until I heard Stromboli's story. He went to Naples and discovered the Camorra. He investigated it and found out exactly what manner of society it was. But let him tell the story in his own words:

Voyons! (he said). I had no sooner come to Naples than the Camorra forced itself upon my notice. Even as I landed from the steamer, I observed the boatman who had brought ashore my modest luggage surreptitiously slipping a small coin into the hand of a stalwart bystander, gaudily attired in the costume that one associates with brigandage, who had all the air of accepting it, not as an alms, but his due. My watchful curiosity was at once excited.

"Who is that man, then?" I asked the sailor curtly.

"It is the Camorrista, signor—it is the Camorra man, sir," he answered, in matter-of-fact tones, as he lifted my luggage into a carriage.

I began to wonder.

My carriage rattled over the stones and set me down in my hotel. Another stalwart individual was waiting there. He, too, was an ornamental person; he wore wide velvet breeches with gold lace upon them, a loose white shirt, a red sash, and a gaudy silk handkerchief knotted over his head. And he, too, reached out his hand to claim a coin which my driver dropped into his palm.

"Who is that man?" I asked again, and got the same answer as before—

"It is the Camorrista, signor—it is the Camorra man."

"And why do you give him money?" I inquired further.

"Because he demands it, signor," the man replied; and he jumped on to his box and drove away before I had time to pursue the subject any further.

I went on wondering.

Evidently this was a strange country to which I had come—a country in which you had only to demand money in the name of a mysterious society in order to obtain it. Would people also give money to me, in case of need, if I also dressed gaudily and stepped forward with a bold address, saying "I am the Camorra man"? The question furnished food for thought.

"To-morrow," I said to myself, "I will investigate this matter. In the meantime, I will dismiss it from my mind, and dine."

I ceased wondering, therefore, and ate my dinner, and strolled out into the city to divert myself.

My diversion took the form of a game of billiards in a *café*, which was not, I must admit, one of the most fashionable *cafés* in the city. It was, in fact, a *café* in the dark and narrow street known as the Tre Capelle—the street of the Three Hats. There was a better opportunity of observing the life of the people there than in the more fashionable quarters.

But I did not merely observe the life of the people. I also won the people's money. My skill at billiards was not, in those days, inconsiderable. In several successive games I was the victor, and each game was played for a higher stake than the game preceding it. Altogether, perhaps, I won enough to pay my hotel bill for a week. Then I pocketed my profits and bade the company a courteous "Good evening."

"*Addio!*" I said, waving my broad-brimmed hat and smiling; and then took my umbrella—for it had been raining—and stepped jauntily into the street.

Hardly had I gone half-a-dozen steps when a stranger stepped out of the shadow and approached me.

The street was dimly lighted with oil lamps, and I could not see him well, but I saw that he, too, was gaudy and robust. His small, round felt hat had cocks' feathers in it, and he wore earrings which glittered in the lamplight. He brandished a cudgel in his right hand, while his left was extended like a mendicant's.

"Our share, signor?" he asked peremptorily, if not quite truculently.

"Whose share? And whom may I have the honour of addressing?" I retorted with no less determination.

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"*Il Camorrista*—the Camorra man," he rejoined, in just such accents as he might have used had he been able to announce himself as the policeman on duty in the neighbourhood.

A sudden curiosity seized me. How would this imperious man behave, I wondered, if I were to prod him quite suddenly and very violently in the pit of the stomach

"'Here, take your share!' I cried, and lunged at him with the skill and rapidity of one accustomed to the foils."

with the point of my umbrella? It seemed an interesting experiment and one well worth trying.

"Here, take your share!" I cried, and lunged at him with the skill and rapidity of one accustomed to the foils.

My eye and aim were sure, and the result was satisfactory. The ferrule struck my antagonist just beneath the breast-bone—at that sensitive point, in fact, which your prizefighters always aim at.

He uttered a cry of pain, staggered, doubled up, and fell in a heap upon the ground.

"*Addio, Camorrista*—farewell, Camorra man," I said, and strode away with dignity, to the amazement and admiration of the onlookers.

But my experience had interested me. I felt that I had lighted upon a mystery, and I was resolved to probe it to the bottom. To that end I rang my bedroom bell, the next morning, and put a question to the chambermaid who answered it.

"Tell me, Lucia, what is the Camorra?"

She stared at me as blankly as though I had requested her to define space or time.

"What is the Camorra, signor? The Camorra, signor—it is the Camorra," she replied.

It was an inadequate explanation, but I thought I might succeed better if I tried a gentler method. So I kissed her and took her hand caressingly.

"*Voyons*, sweetheart!" I said. "There is no need for you to be afraid. I will protect you. Tell me everything that you know about this Camorra."

To my amazement, she snatched her hand away and ran screaming down the corridor.

I changed my tone.

"Baby! Send up the landlord to me!" I shouted after her.

He came with the indignant air of a man whose establishment I had outraged by the commission of an impropriety; but I received him with an indignation equal to his own.

"*Voyons*, landlord!" I exclaimed. "What is the meaning of all this? Is this house a lunatic asylum?"

He replied that it was nothing of the kind.

"It is because my house is not a lunatic

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asylum," he added, "that I invite the signor to leave it without delay."

It was natural that I should express myself strongly.

"Leave your house!" I said. "Neither your manners nor your macaronis tempt me to make a long stay in it. But before I go, I must have an answer to a question. I insist. Attend!"

He glared, as though knowing that the question would be an awkward one. I met his gaze and put the question firmly.

"*Voyons!* What I want to know is this: What is the Camorra? Why have I been invited—unceremoniously and with menaces—to subscribe to it? To what purpose would my subscription have been devoted had I paid it instead of felling the agent of the society—the collector of its tribute—with an unexpected blow?"

But I did not get the plain answer to the plain question which I thought I had a right to. Nor did I get admiration for my courageous feat of arms. My landlord's face expressed only amazement and dismay. He threw up his arms with the gesture of a man abandoning hope.

"The signor struck the Camorrista?"

"*Voyons!* I have already told you that I struck him with great force, to the astonishment of the spectators. I left him in the gutter of the street of——"

"Then the life of the signor is in peril, and my life also. The vengeance of the Camorra——"

"What is this Camorra, then?" I interrupted.

"The Camorra is——"

"Well?"

"The Camorra is the Camorra. It is forbidden to say more."

"But I command you to say more."

My tone—perhaps my movements also—implied a vague threat of violence. But the landlord did not wait for me to lay hands on him. He fled, as the chambermaid had fled; but he slammed the door after him and turned the key and locked me in. Then he called through the keyhole—

"Will the signor forgive me? It is the only way. I will arrange for the signor's safety before the Camorra——"

I heard no more, for I was hanging on to the knob, rattling the door, and kicking at the panels.

They would not yield, being solid, as though built in the old days when any house might be required at any time to stand a siege. I assailed the door, first with a chair, and then with a wash-hand jug, with no result except that I broke both of them. Then I sat down and reflected. My window was on the fourth floor and looked on the hotel courtyard, so that escape in that direction was impossible. But there still remained one other plan. I had my revolver.

"*Voyons!* Stand clear there, everybody, while I shoot!" I called through the keyhole; and then I pulled the trigger and blew away the lock.

In the silence which followed the report I heard the tramp of heavy footsteps in the corridor. Still gripping the smoking weapon, I stepped outside to receive my visitors.

Imagine my surprise when I saw that they were policemen, and that my landlord was guiding them to my apartment, carrying the key. His language was polite, however, and he offered an explanation.

"It is arranged," he said. "If the signor will be so kind as to pay his bill, these gentlemen will afford the signor the protection that is necessary for him."

"And the Camorra?" I asked.

"Hush!" he replied, lifting both his hands to enjoin silence.

So I paid my bill and accompanied my police escort, trying to think more kindly of my landlord.

I said to myself: "The good man means well. He fears lest I should be assassinated by this terrible and all-pervading society. He procures me police protection. I will write to him and say that it was quite unnecessary, but that I am nevertheless obliged to him." Then, as we got out into the street, I proceeded to enter into conversation with my escort.

"*Voyons!*" I said to them. "You, at least, my friends, will be able to give me some information about this mysterious Camorra."

"Silence!" in authoritative accents, was the only answer that I got.

"Have a glass of wine with me, then, before we go any further," I suggested.

They agreed to that, and sat round me outside a *café* and drank at my expense; but the refreshment did not make them much more communicative. The Camorra was the Camorra. It was secret; it was powerful. It helped its friends, and punished its enemies without mercy. The people who did not belong to it had to pay tribute to those who did. That was all the information I could get.

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"It must be a society that works for the revolution," I suggested.

"Silence!" came the answer again, in accents half savage and half scared; and we left the *café* and marched on.

It occurred to me that we had gone far enough and that I did not need police protection any longer. I said so, adding—

"Where are you taking me, my friends? To the railway-station or to the steamboat?"

They laughed. It is not often that a policeman laughs, but these policemen laughed like countrymen at the theatre seeing their first farce.

"Where are we taking you?" they cackled, with horrible grimaces.

"Precisely. That is my question?"

"Well, to the prison, of course. Where else?"

"To the prison, indeed! But I am under police protection!"

They roared with laughter.

"Under police protection! It is a way of putting it, when one has a light heart and loves a joke."

"A joke?"

"Certainly, seeing that you are under arrest."

"On what charge, *voyons?*"

They shrugged their shoulders like one man.

"Who knows? There may be a charge; there may be none. It may be sustained; it may break down. Who knows?"

"I assailed the door, first with a chair."

"Do you mean to tell me that at Naples a stranger may be arrested——"

"Obviously."

"With no more ceremony than if he were being asked to dinner? I do not believe it. There is some mystery here. The Camorra——"

"Silence!"

"The Camorra is at the bottom of this. The Camorra and the landlord are in a conspiracy against me——"

"It is possible. We have no information on the subject."

"But I will resist their machinations. I will confound them. I will probe the mystery to the bottom. *Voyons!* I am Jean Antoine——"

"It is possible — we have no information. But here is the prison."

Resistance was out of the question. It seemed likely, indeed, that I should be safer in the prison than outside it. There, at least, I might find some intelligent person who would listen to my explanation; there, at least, I should have respite from the attentions of the Camorra, and a plain answer to a civil question.

"Patience!" I said to myself, as the great gate clanged behind me; and it soon became evident that I should have need of patience. For this Neapolitan prison was quite different from any other prison that I had ever been confined in.

There was no ceremonious reception of new-comers by the authorities; they

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did not even trouble to ask who one was.

There was no privacy. Separate cells were only provided for prisoners condemned to death—a heavy price to pay for such a privilege. For the rest, the inmates were herded together in great courtyards, with no distinction between those convicted and those awaiting trial, and no one, so far as I could see, to supervise their conduct. It was, as it were, a republic of evil-doers in which I was turned loose to take my chance and find my level.

"There are your quarters. Soup and macaroni are served out twice daily. The other prisoners will tell you where you can sleep," said the gaoler curtly.

"But, *voyons!* I demand to know——" I protested.

"Silence! Don't bother me with your foolish questions," he replied, and slammed a door and disappeared.

So I got no satisfaction from him, and my heart sank within me. A period of *ennui*—a term of weary waiting, with discomfort but without excitement—that seemed to be the fate in store for me. But once more—so far, at least, as the excitement was concerned—I was mistaken. A fellow prisoner provided me with immediate excitement.

He was tall, lithe, masterful in demeanour. He approached me, like the man whom I had prodded in the stomach after my game of billiards, with one hand extended for a donation, and the other brandishing a cudgel.

"The due?" he demanded curtly.

"What due?" I asked calmly.

"To buy oil for the lamp of the Madonna."

It was a formula, though I did not know it. But I was not, as you may suppose, in a conciliatory temper. I drew myself up haughtily and said: "*Voyons!* My good man, I was not aware that I had the pleasure of your acquaintance."

He introduced himself.

"*Io sono il Camorrista*—I am the Camorra man."

It was a blow to me. Were my footsteps to be dogged there, even in prison, by the representatives of this mysterious society? It seemed so. Yet, in a sense, I was glad to meet it there. It was a chance of solving the perplexing mystery, and I determined to solve it, even at the risk of a temporary misunderstanding.

I fixed my eyes on the man, showing that I was ready to defend myself, and spoke to him seriously.

"*Voyons!*" I said to him. "The last Camorra man who was rude to me is now suffering from a pain in the pit of the stomach, and he wasn't either so rude or so ugly as you are."

"*Corpo di Baccho!*" the man exclaimed, making as though he would strike me, yet hesitating before my determined attitude.

"But let us be reasonable," I continued. "Let me make a proposal to you."

"Speak!"

"Ever since my arrival at Naples, I have been curious to know what your Camorra is, and what it does with the money which it collects with such systematic industry. If you will tell me, I will give you a piece of gold; and if you do not tell me, I will give you nothing."

Would he have yielded if we had been alone? I cannot say. A knot of our fellow-prisoners had gathered round us, and his pride was at stake.

"Silence! You have not to ask questions, but to pay."

My temper was roused, and I resolved to precipitate the crisis. I flung a piece of gold—part of my winnings at the billiard-table—on the ground and challenged him.

I cried: "No one shall say that Jean Antoine Stromboli Kosnapulski is mean. There is your money, and I will fight you for it."

A fierce cry of approval went up from the bystanders.

"A duel! A duel!" they exclaimed in chorus, and the representative of the Camorra—to do him justice—did not shrink from the encounter.

"Antonio!" he called to a companion, "fetch knives!" And I made the strange discovery that, in a Neapolitan prison, the prisoners were allowed to borrow knives for the settlement of their affairs of honour.

But I would not have a knife. It is a weapon in the use of which I have had little practice.

"No, no!" I cried. "I will take no unfair advantage of you. It shall be your knife against my umbrella. Does that seem fair to you?"

He seemed to hesitate, as one who dreads an unfamiliar danger; but the public opinion of the prison was in favour of my proposal. It had novelty; it promised strange spectacular effects calculated to relieve the tedium of prison life. So my opponent found it impossible to refuse.

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"As you prefer," he said; and seconds were appointed and a space was cleared. At the given word, we advanced to meet each other from opposite corners of the court-yard.

Do you ask me for details of the combat? I am not vain. Therefore I will not dwell upon them at undue length.

It was like this. The Camorrista at first advanced stealthily, with long, catlike strides; and I on my part advanced firmly, holding myself upright, like a master of fencing of the French rather than the Italian school. Then the Camorrista launched himself upon me like the greyhound bounding upon the hare. I saw his purpose—to grip the stick of my weapon with his left hand while he lunged with the right with a quick, simultaneous movement. As he seized it, I thrust at him, taking a quick pace to the right as I did so. He fumbled and was delayed for half a second, and the delay gave me my chance. As soon as my right foot was planted on the ground, I launched the *coup de savate* with my left. Before he could swing the knife round, and at the moment when he was bending slightly forward, the blow caught him in that same point beneath the breast bone in which my antagonist of the previous evening had been wounded.

The knife dropped from his grasp. He fell moaning and helpless. It was over. I was victorious; and I pointed with my umbrella at my opponent where he lay.

"*Voyons*, gentlemen! The coin remains my property, I think," I said, picking it up and replacing it in my pocket.

"If any other gentleman desires to do battle similarly for the Madonna's oil——" I continued, but none came forward. On the contrary, they cheered me as the ancient Romans, of whom you have heard, might have cheered a triumphant gladiator.

"I thank you, gentlemen," I said, bowing with dignity, and walked away.

But my triumph was to have a consequence which I did not foresee. For the remainder of the day my mind was not entirely easy. Some of my fellow-prisoners were whispering together in a manner that did not tend to reassure me. My antagonist had partially recovered and was the centre of mysterious conclaves. There seemed reason to fear that an advantage would be taken of me while I slept—some act of violence done to me in the dark.

I said to myself: "I cannot keep awake every night; but this night it is necessary that I should watch and see what happens."

Nor had I long to wait before I saw something to justify my fears. The very man whom I had discomfited in the morning was creeping stealthily towards me along the dormitory floor, where I lay stretched, as all the others were, upon a poor, hard mattress. I waited until he had got quite close to me, and then suddenly sat bolt upright, with my hand on my umbrella, prepared to strike with it. But there was no need to strike.

"Hush!" the man whispered. "You proved yourself this morning. I now come to you as a friend. I bring you these."

Imagine my surprise when I saw him gently place a small handful of small coins upon my bed.

"*Voyons!* What does this mean, then?" I whispered in reply, still watching and suspecting treachery.

"It is your share."

"My share of what?"

"Of the *barattolo*—of the funds that we collect."

"But——"

"It is offered as a token that we wish you to be one of us."

"One of you? One of the Camorra?"

"Precisely. It is the rule, when a man has proved himself, that he shall be invited to be one of us."

It really seemed as though my chance had come to get an answer to my question. I reached out my hand in sign of amity and asked it.

"Speak to me as a friend, then. Excuse my ignorance, and tell me what is this Camorra which I am asked to join."

But I was once more put off.

"Hush! It is the rule only to inform the companions by degrees."

"But you might at least begin informing me?"

"Yes, I may tell you something. It is a society—secret and powerful. Those who do not love it, fear it. It has influence everywhere. It brought you here. It will arrange your release to-morrow, by withdrawing the charge against you. A companion will meet you at the prison-gate. Do as he bids you."

"But the object of the society? The purposes to which it devotes the great sums of money which——"

"Hush! It is of that that I must not inform you yet. You know, at least, that it is better to be the friend of the Camorra than its enemy."

And that, at any rate, was clearly true. Can you blame me if, knowing that, and

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desiring my release, I agreed to join the society even without a full knowledge of its objects? Can you blame me if I further felt that loyalty bound me to be obedient to the behests of the companion who was to await me at the gate? This time I had to do with a Camorrista dressed as a gentleman.

"You are the new companion?" he asked me, when I came out.

"I am the new companion, Jean Antoine Stromboli Kosnapulski," I replied.

"I was expecting you," he said.

"It is very kind of you," I answered. "Perhaps you will add to your kindness by informing me what are the political objects of this interesting society in which I have enrolled myself."

"Hush!" he said. "At present I am only permitted to inform you of the duties which you are to discharge."

"Your behaviour strikes me as very equivocal," I protested.

But he reasoned with me gently.

"What!" he said. "You would know all—before you have proved yourself, before you have given guarantees? You will not trust the Camorra — even when the Camorra shows that it has trust in you? Consider, now. Does not our confidence merit yours?"

"But I have a curiosity to know."

"Naturally—most naturally. And it will not be very long before your curiosity is gratified."

"How long, then?"

"A week, perhaps."

"You mean that?"

"Most assuredly. There are men who have worked years to obtain the privilege which you have won by a single act of courage."

"In a week, then——"

"In a week you will receive notice of the meeting called for your initiation as a member of the Camorra."

"And then I shall know all?"

"All—provided that in the meantime you have faithfully performed the duties that I lay upon you."

"Your words are plausible," I said. "You are an honest man. Let me shake hands with you."

"As soon as my right foot was planted on the ground, I launched the *coup de savate* with my left."

We shook hands, and my colleague explained the nature of my appointed task. Outside the *café* at which I had felled the Camorrista to the ground, I was myself to stand as the representative of the Camorra. I was to collect the Camorra's share — a

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tenth of every winner's winnings. I was to account to the Camorra for the money—the Camorra would dispose of it.

"It does not strike me as an occupation of great dignity," I represented.

"Indeed! It is a position of trust that I assign to you."

There clearly was something in that.

"If I were quite sure," I added, "of the objects of the association, and of the use to which the money would be put——"

He smiled and nodded, saying—

"You will soon know; and when you know, you will have no reason to be displeased."

Then he left me, and I lunched and proceeded to my post, and acted to the best of my ability as Collector of Revenues to the Camorra.

There were no difficulties to be encountered. The tax-collectors of the Government must have envied me the simplicity of my task. There were no troublesome forms to be filled up; there were no irritating requests to call again. I had merely to extend my hand, and the coins were counted into it without demur. Nor had I to keep books. To prevent mistakes, I put the Camorra moneys aside in a separate bag. For the rest, there was perfect reliance on my honour.

In due course a letter was slipped into my hands, running thus—

Dear Companion,—It is for to-night, in the cellar of the house by which thou watchest. Thou shalt be initiated, and then shalt be informed of all. Nothing further.

THY COMPANION.

It was a great occasion for me, and I prepared myself to do full justice to it.

"*Voyons!*" I said to myself. "I will make my toilet; and while I am making my toilet, I will compose my speech. *Grande tenue*, I take it, will be *en règle*. Even if I am wrong, I shall have paid my companions a compliment by thinking so, and it will also be a compliment to be able to address them in a few well-chosen words."

So, as I had no dress-clothes with me, I hired a suit, wearing also a flowing cape to cover it, in case it should seem ostentatious; and I collected my thoughts and polished my phrases, that I might deliver a suitable harangue on the principles of whatever revolution might be contemplated.

Alas! it was a waste of energy, as you shall see. Listen to me, I beg of you, while I describe my first and last appearance at a formal committee meeting of the Camorra.

The place was a long, low room, below the level of the street, reached from the *café* by a winding staircase; stone oil-lamps, swinging from the ceiling, lighted it dimly; clouds of tobacco smoke thickened the atmosphere; bottles of red wine and tumblers were set out on a long table, on which no cloth was laid.

There were from twenty-five to thirty companions present—companions of all kinds and all social grades; companions who had all the appearance of prosperous professional men—doctors, lawyers, and magistrates—some of these, like myself, were in evening dress, with white gloves; companions who looked like working men; companions who looked like wandering Neapolitan mandolinists. It seemed strange that *camaraderie* should prevail among them; yet so it was. They sat round the table together clinking glasses, while I was placed on a high stool near the door awaiting the ceremony of my initiation. It was a very simple ceremony. The president of the assemblage rose and addressed me.

"It is the rule," he said, "to require a new companion to prove himself by fighting a duel with some existing member of——"

"I shall be most pleased," I interposed. "If you yourself, Signor President, will do me the great honour of encountering me, I will endeavour——"

"In certain cases," the president continued, "the rule is waived. It is waived in your case, because you have already proved yourself."

"On two occasions, Signor President," I reminded him.

"Precisely — on two occasions. Consequently the third proof is not required."

"You are quite sure, Signor President? I ask no favour. Rather than that any irregularity should be committed——"

"There will be no irregularity. It will only be necessary for you to swear the oath. Repeat it after me."

He recited the formula, a short and simple one. I swore to be faithful to the Camorra, to keep its secrets, to obey its orders, to betray no companions to the police. And that was all.

"Now drink," said the president. And a tumbler of red wine was handed to me, and I duly drained it to the dregs, after first walking round the table and clinking glasses with every member.

"And now," the president continued, "we reach the business of the evening."

I listened eagerly. At last, it seemed, the mystery was to be solved, and I was to learn the secret of the Camorra—in what sacred

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"It was no time for argument. I hurled my stool at the nearest of them."

cause it gathered in its revenues, and by what subtle means it proposed to employ them for the overthrow of principalities and powers. The truth burst upon me like a thunderbolt.

"Giovanni, bring me the books!" called the president to a subordinate. And two great ledgers, such as you see in merchants' offices, were laid before him.

"And the cash!" he added; and a number of small bags full of coins were also brought.

In a few minutes he was immersed in calculations, while a loud buzz of talk went on around him. Then he looked up, and banging upon the table, called for silence. When he spoke, you could have heard a pin drop.

"The week has been a fortunate one," he said, and cheers broke out. "In addition to the ordinary tribute collected on the quays, at the hotels, and in the *cafés*, some heavy fees have been received from farmers whose cattle the companions have promised not to poison, and from citizens at whose houses the companions have undertaken that there shall be no burglaries. The *barattolo*——"

"*Viva il barattolo!*" shouted the companions gleefully.

"The *barattolo* for the week amounts to the sum of 20,000 lire (loud cheers). When the necessary deductions have been made for working expenses, and for the remuneration of the office-bearers of the society, there remain 730 lire for each companion."

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Not a word, you perceive, about the political purposes of the society, concerning which I had been promised information. I rose from my stool to point out the omission.

"*Voyons*, companions——" I began, but the president signed to me to be silent and continued—

"Let me proceed to the distribution of the funds. Giovanni, take this bag first to the companion, Jean Antoine Stromboli Kosnapulski."

My turn had come, and I was free to speak. They cheered me as I rose, imagining, no doubt, that I wished to return thanks for the honour done to me. But this was not my purpose. My suspicions were awakened, and I concentrated those suspicions in the form of searching questions.

I began: "This bag of money is for me?"

"Naturally," replied the president.

"To do what I like with?"

"Absolutely."

"And for each companion present there is a similar bag for him also, to do what he likes with?"

"Assuredly. We are all brothers here."

"And the great revenues of this great society are collected for no other purpose than to be thus divided weekly among the favoured few?"

"Precisely. For what other purpose should we trouble to collect them?"

"Then I have a word to say."

For now the truth was out, and my suspicions were confirmed, and indignation had followed in their train.

The companions stared at me—puzzled by my vehemence; but I quickly made them understand. The burning sentences flowed like red-hot lava from my lips. The speech which I delivered was not the speech which I had prepared. It was an infinitely greater speech.

"Yes! I have a word to say to you; and that word is this: You have deceived, deluded, fooled me; you have inveigled me by your fair words into a companionship of which I find myself at once ashamed."

A murmur was arising, but I quelled it.

"Silence! I have not finished. I have but begun. By your nods and your winks and your mysterious words you led me to believe that in joining you I was joining the mightiest revolutionary society that the world had ever seen. Heaven knows that I shrink from no revolutionary enterprise. Heaven knows that I am willing to adopt strong measures to raise the money which such enterprises need. And I thought that you were raising money for such a purpose, and that I was helping you to raise it. But what do I find? I find that you plunder—plunder the poor and weak and helpless—not for a cause, but for yourselves. I thought to be taking part with you in a high political conspiracy, and I find myself—I, *moi qui vous parle*, find myself—sitting and drinking in a den of thieves!"

There was a further murmur; but this, too, I quelled.

"Silence! I have nearly done. It remains for me to shake the dust from off my feet. It remains for me to say that I resign my membership, that I repudiate you, that I sever my connection with you, that I denounce you——"

But I got no further. It was the word "denounce," unfortunately chosen, with its suggestion of betrayal to the police, that spurred the companions to action. Their numbers gave them courage; their knives flashed; as a single man they leapt at me.

It was no time for argument. I hurled my stool at the nearest of them, and so gained a start. On the winding stair one of them clutched at the skirt of my cape; I threw my arms back, so that it came off in his hands. Then, in my evening-dress and opera-hat, I gained the street and ran, some twenty Neapolitan ruffians, with their knives drawn, pursuing.

But I was fleet of foot, and they pursued in vain; and when I had reached the railway-station, and jumped into the carriage of a departing train—which seemed, in the circumstances, the safest place of refuge—I found that my bag of coins was safely in my pocket.

"*Voyons!*" I said to myself, as I examined it. "If I could return each of these coins to its rightful owner! But that is obviously impossible; there is no alternative but to retain them as a memento of a remarkable experience that is hardly likely to occur again."

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THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

TOMMY: Does your father always say it pains him when he licks you?

FREDDY: Not always; but when I dodge, and the strap takes him in the leg, I know it does.

HE (cautiously): If I should propose, would you say "Yes"?

SHE (still more cautiously): If you knew I would say "Yes," would you propose?

"MR. CASTLETON is an awfully good friend of yours, isn't he? He was telling me yesterday that you were just determined to join his club."

"Yes, I am. And what else did he say?"

"Why, he said if you did, you could take his place."

GLADYS: They tell me Mr. Bangs drinks terribly.

GWENNIE: Oh, horribly! He pours it out in his saucer every time.

"FREDDY, why did you drop the baby on the floor?"

"Well, I heard everybody say it was a bouncing baby, and I wanted to see it bounce."

THE UNCALLED ROLL.

TOMMY: Hallo, Bobby! have you shot anything?

BOBBY SMITH (noted for carrying his gun carelessly): I don't quite know.

TOMMY: Waiting for the rest of the party to return, I suppose, to find whether there's anybody missing or not?

"I HAVE received an invitation from Mrs. FitzGibbons. Is she fashionable?"

"Fashionable? Rather! Why, she's had appendicitis, been divorced, and been sued for running down a man with her automobile. What more do you want?"

"WHAT would you do if you could play the piano as I do?" asked the young mistress of the housemaid.

"Shure an Oi wouldn't get discouraged at all, at all, miss. Oi'd kape right on larnin' till Oi could play it decently."

HE: My dear, I believe there's something you've forgotten to buy.

SHE: I believe there is. But how did you know?

HE: Well, I've got some money left!

MINISTER (to crowd of boys leading a much-disturbed dog by a string): Boys, what are you doing to that poor dog?

BOYS: We ain't doin' nuthin'. We're tryin' to see who gits the dorg. The fellow that tells the biggest lie gits him, see?

MINISTER: Don't you know that's wrong? Why, I never told a lie in my life.

BOYS: You take the dorg.

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PRESIDENT OF BANKRUPT SOUTH AMERICAN REPUBLIC: Carambo! No money in the treasury, and another revolution breaking out. What shall we do?

TREASURER: I have an idea, señor. Let us issue a new brand of postage-stamps and recall them in about a week.

PRESIDENT: And what good will that do?

TREASURER: Why, every stamp-collector will want specimens, and they will soon become of enormous value.

SIMPLE: I wonder why fishermen always exaggerate so terribly about the fish they catch?

SHARPE: Because it's a lot easier to lie than it is to catch fish.

CONSTANT INQUIRER: Whose funeral was that that passed here just now?

BORED LISTENER: Snooks's.

CONSTANT INQUIRER: What! Is Snooks dead.

BORED LISTENER: Not that I know of. He is probably riding around in the hearse for the fun of the thing.

CONSOLATION.

"SHE actually has the nerve to assert that I wear a false fringe!"

"Pure guesswork! She's too short-sighted to detect it."

"BROWN says he has an auto for sale."

"I'm not surprised. I sold him mine on Monday."

"I'M glad I met Hennigan's wife."

"What! Glad you met that woman?"

"Yes. I now understand something that has often puzzled me. I used to wonder what was the matter with him."

"THERE's two months' dust on this piano, Jane!"

"That can't be my fault, mum; I've only been here a month."

SO THEY HAVE!

"I SEE you have a toy bull-dog, Aunt Martha. Ugly little beggar, isn't he?

"Yes, Fred, he is rather ugly. But think what a protection he will be to me on these lonely roads. Tramps have a horror of bull-dogs.

MOTHER: Cleanliness is next to godliness.

SMALL BOY: Then say, mother, why is it wrong to go swimming on Sunday?

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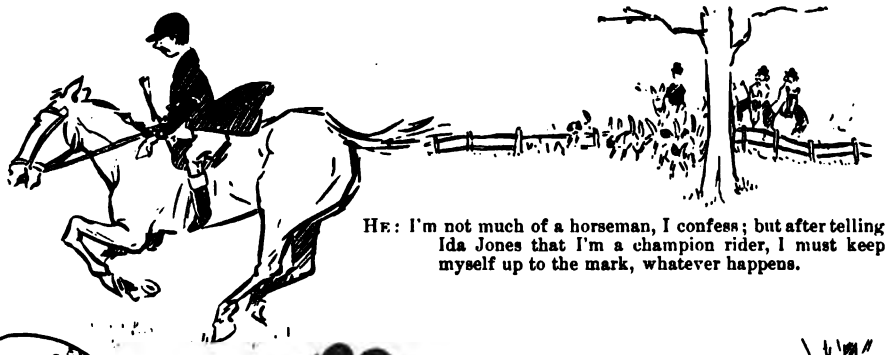
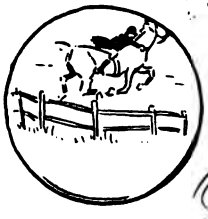
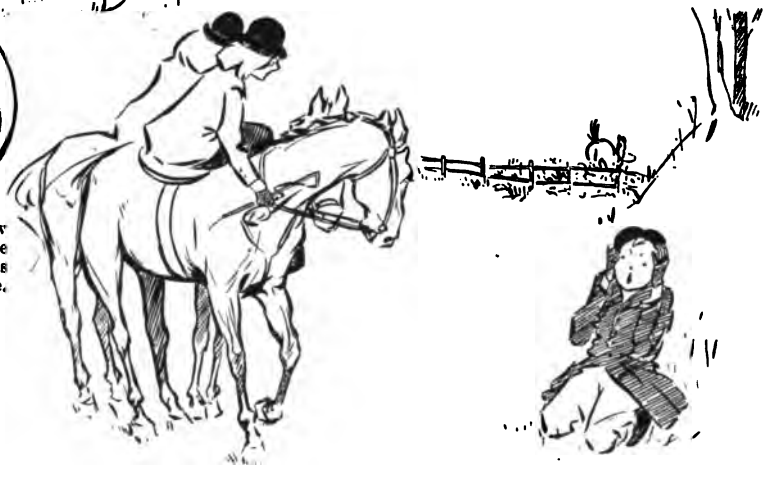


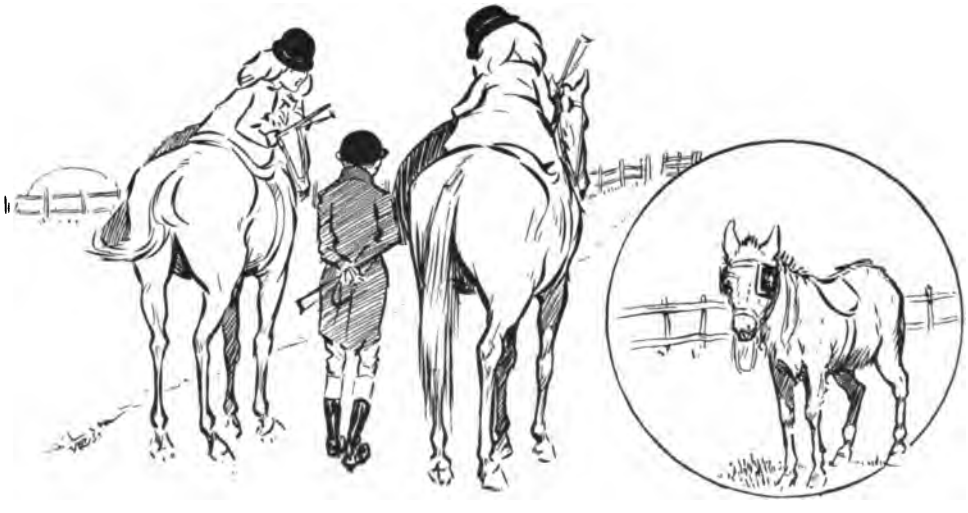
HE: I'm not much of a horseman, I confess; but after telling Ida Jones that I'm a champion rider, I must keep myself up to the mark, whatever happens.



SHE: I wonder why Jack's gone off like that? I believe he's afraid of his horse.



HE: This is too dreadful. To think that I should have fallen off the silly thing just here!
SHE: I believe I'm right—he is afraid.



HE: Nice ignominy this, after my talk! But she ought to know that accidents will happen sometimes.

SHE: Next time I invite him to come to a meet, I'll send him one of these to ride.

MOST MORTIFYING. BY HILDA COWHAM.

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HAPPY BRIDEGROOM: Thank Heaven! the fuss is all over, and I have you all to myself.

STILL HAPPIER BRIDE: Yes; and now let us take a last look at the wedding presents, before papa sends them back to the jewellers.

RESCUER (in boat, holding wig): I didn't know it was false when I grabbed it—give me your hand.

LADY: Are there many people on the beach?

RESCUER: Yes.

LADY: Then let me drown.

"I WONDER why Jones whistles so much."

"Probably to keep up his courage. A man who whistles as badly as he does is in constant danger of death."

"THERE'S so much pathos in his work."

"But he draws so badly."

"That's where the pathos comes in."

"WHEN that young man comes, Bridget, show him into the drawing-room."

"My young man or yours, mum?"

THE EXPLANATION.

"I WONDER why she ever became engaged to him. She can't intend to marry him."

"Oh, no; but he has such a lovely motor-car."

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"NANCY."

A Portrait-Study by F. Russ.

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"REFUGEES FROM MACEDONIA SAFE OVER THE BULGARIAN FRONTIER, LOOKING BACK AT THEIR BURNING VILLAGE."

FROM A PICTURE BY IVAN MARKVITCHKA.

A PAINTER OF BULGARIANS.

By Frederick Moore.*

LIFE is safe in Bulgaria; M. Markvitchka's pictures of massacre and fire relate to the old Turkish times before that principality was created, or to the Macedonia of to-day.

With the Bulgarians half free and half subjects still of His Sultanic Majesty, it is no wonder that there is fleeing from persecution on one side and filibustering for freedom on the other. The revolutionists, whether would-be liberators from Bulgaria, refugees returning to Macedonia armed, or peasants who have never set foot on free soil, goaded to desperation, all are dubbed by the Turks brigands. When I was in Turkey last year, a news telegram in which the insurgents were called brigands would generally pass the Censor; with any dignified name it would not. This was an effective piece of work on the part of the Turks: there is much in a name. Bulgarian and brigand have come to be synonymous to the Eastern mind, and the correspondents who flocked to the uprising from England, France, and America last summer flattered themselves that they were taking their lives in their hands. It was well to go armed in Turkey, but they generally buckled on their cartridge-belts on leaving Semlin. The Bulgarians are a people, unlike some of the others of south-eastern Europe, incapable of dissembling; they cannot smile when their feelings are hurt. After I had visited Macedonia and learned for myself that they did brigand deeds only in desperation, one of them volunteered: "You thought we were barbarians. We have found it useless to tell Englishmen and Americans that they can go anywhere in this country as safely as they can in their own, so we let them carry their great revolvers—though it hurts our feelings. Will you come with me to see some of our art?"

Out of sympathy I went. Art among these peasants who had come out of slavery only twenty-five years! And yet I had stood on the tops of their magnificent mountains, I had gone to their horse-sales, and to their villages on *fête*-days, I had marched with

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their army, and everywhere grieved that no great painter had gone down into the heart of Bulgaria. But when I entered the home of Ivan Markvitchka, in the suburbs of Sofia, I felt that first place could never be attained by any foreign painter of the Bulgars.

Homes are not magnificent in Sofia, wealth is scarce, and art pays badly. Consequently the great artist of the country lives humbly. A long garden leads up to his little home. At our knock his wife opened the door and bade us a cordial welcome in Bulgarian, but seeing that I did not know that language, she changed to French. Markvitchka was at the art school, not far away. She sent for him, and he arrived in a few minutes. His studio was small, and most of his pictures were stacked one against another, faces to the wall. He was modest about

"A BASHI-BAZOUK TRYING THE SHARPNESS OF HIS YATAGHAN."
BY IVAN MARKVITCHKA.

showing them, until we displayed our appreciation of the few that were visible. Then he turned around one canvas at a time, watching closely that he should not bore us; but we looked at all he then had, which were not, however, very many. His masterpiece, "The 'Horo' in a Bulgarian Hahn," was at the palace, Prince Ferdinand having purchased it. This is the only picture he has ever exhibited in western Europe, where he is practically unknown. It brought for him, however, at the Paris Exhibition, a

"A BULGARIAN BRIDE."
BY IVAN MARKVITCHKA.

gold medal. The *horo* is the national dance of Bulgaria, and while it is properly performed in the open and on *fête*-days, often two peasants will throw aside care and woe and dance for their own amusement. I have seen the sight which Markvitchka presents scores of times in the country *hahns* —comfortable refuges in winter, though floorless and crude. The details of Markvitchka's pictures are carefully worked. In this one, from the peasant faces to the Turkish coffee-pots on the wall over the oven, everything is just as it would be in a Bulgarian inn—the sheepskin coats of the Bulgars, their sandals, with the lacings running up about their homespun stockings, the rough grace of the toilers of the mountains, the enthusiasm of the dancers, and the interest of some of the onlookers and indifference of the others.

The best picture which Markvitchka still possessed was probably "Mourning-Day in a Village Cemetery." His figures stand out from the canvas—or, rather, the perspective sinks back from about them. This cemetery scene is the most striking example of his perspective. Much of the effect, though, is lost in the photographic reproduction. The

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"THE LATE PRINCESS MARIE LOUISE OF BULGARIA IN ANCIENT BYZANTINE COSTUME."
BY IVAN MARKVITCHKA.

picture represents the graveyard of a little village not far from Sofia, where the peasants gather four times a year with boiled wheat, native wine, bread, and honey, which they lay on the graves of the dead. Around the sacrifice, little tapers, home-made, are stuck in the soft earth and lit. The sombre, black-robed priests, with their high head-gear, like a stove-pipe hat reversed, and their long hair and beards, pass from grave to grave and pray, while the living sing the merits of their dead. When the prayers are done, the food is gathered in the centre of the yard and blessed. Then it is distributed to the poor—or, I should say, poorer. In a little village deep in Macedonia once I happened upon such a festival. Around the Bulgarian women were gathered innumerable

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Tzigane (gipsy) men, women, and children. These lazy beings, who seldom work, and live only to satisfy their flesh, are the worst of *bashi-bazouks*. To the Tzigane men probably many of the Bulgarian graves were due; and yet the Bulgarian women, in their simplicity, distributed to these worthless creatures the sacrifice which had cost them three long months of stinting.

"ON FÊTE-DAY. BULGARIAN GIRLS IN HOLIDAY DRESS DANCING THE 'HORO.'"
BY IVAN MARKVITCHKA.

About the best of Markvitchka's compositions is his burning village, with the fleeing peasants just safe across the border. The Turkish troops and the *bashi-bazouks* have come, but the peasants got news of their approach in time to gather some of their effects and escape across the frontier. Safe over the line they rest; tired women suckle their crying babes; buffaloes, tender animals, are covered with the spare blankets; there are none left for the ox-teams, which in the picture almost munch their cuds; men in sheepskin coats gaze back on the flames devouring their village; and the dog—the only knowing beast—sends up the only wail. Some of the deeds done in Macedonia, which Markvitchka has portrayed, are too terrible to reproduce.

"The Pursuit" is an interesting study. The Turk is looking over a rock by the side of a river, wondering where his fugitive has gone. The Bulgarian has been taught cleverness by his hounding. He has thrown his cap out into the stream to make his armed follower believe he is drowned, while he waits beneath the stone, with just his nose out of water, till the Turk gives up the chase and departs. This is the story of a true incident in the recent disturbances.

While Markvitchka's pictures of the present struggle in Macedonia are most interesting in subject, from the artist's point of view his studies of peace are probably finer. His village wedding in free Bulgaria is about the best picture, altogether, still in his possession. The bride bows low to an old man who greets her, the groom still wears the crown placed on his head at the little church on the hill, the bagpiper plays the wedding march, and the younger girls dance, for they have moved up a peg in the line. The mate to this picture, the ceremony at the church, has just been bought by a Chicago millionaire who passed through Sofia recently. A little picture of the face

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"A VILLAGE WEDDING. THE RETURN FROM THE CHURCH."
BY IVAN MARKVITCHKA.

of a Bulgarian bride shows the head-dress of flowers which she wears whenever she appears in public for some weeks after her wedding. Whenever she meets an older or superior person whom she knows, she must bow until her wreath of flowers touches the ground; but the older or superior person has to pay the penalty with all the small change he can spare.

In some parts of Macedonia the Bulgarian girls wear their dowries on strings as necklaces, interwoven with their innumerable plaits of hair and about their shoulders—if their dowry is large enough to go so far.

"IN A BULGARIAN HAHN. DANCING THE 'HORO.'"
BY IVAN MARKVITCHKA.

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That is the reason all small coins in Turkey have holes in them. Probably the display is meant to entice the other sex, but as it also attracts *bashi-bazouks*, a stranger can seldom get to see the display. Markvitchka has represented in one of his pictures two girls dancing in full regalia.

"ST. BORIS, THE PATRON SAINT OF BULGARIA."
BY IVAN MARKVITCHKA.

Markvitchka's types are splendid. Among his best are the *bashi-bazouk* sharpening his *yataghan*, the Tzigane poultry-girl carrying her feathered wares for sale, the goatherd perched in a nook in the precipitous side of a mountain, like his goats, and the old Bulgar who has eked out all his existence in hope of deliverance, but still wears the fez. All these are really portraits, though the artist has not confined himself to mere likeness in gathering his types. But he has done much in actual portrait-painting as well, of which the picture of the late Princess of Bulgaria, Marie Louise, is a good specimen.

Markvitchka's sense of subject is as strong as his artistic feeling. His pictures catch the eye, then hold it until a scrutiny of the brush-marks is made. His colour might be considered a little extravagant in western Europe, but as he is faithful in detail, he is also true to the semi-oriental colouring which pervades his country.

It is a great thing for an artist to have the same soul as his subjects. A glance through Markvitchka's pictures impresses one with the fact that he loves and is loved, hates and is hated with the Bulgarians. A Frenchman or an Englishman could not paint Bulgarians as he does. A foreigner cannot paint British character; even more must a painter of Bulgarians have a Bulgarian soul.

Markvitchka, however, was not born a Bulgar. He came into the world a Slav, like them; not in the great Slav country,

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which only wears the cloak of sympathy for Bulgaria, but in one which Austria holds—Bohemia. The newly freed Slavs interested him. Anxious to reach full civilisation at a bound, the Bulgarians established public schools along with other free institutions immediately upon being relieved of the Turkish yoke. In the early 'eighties the painter went out to East Rumelia to teach drawing in one of these. He was a modest little man who had to be found out. Till

"MOUNTAIN GOATHERD."
BY IVAN MARKVITCHKA.

"A STUDY OF MACEDONIAN TYPE."
BY IVAN MARKVITCHKA.

1885 he existed humbly at Philippolis, teaching school to live, and painting to make life worth living. Then the romantic events of that year led to his discovery by no less a person than the heroic Prince Alexander.

At that time Bulgaria was but half its present size, East Rumelia, with a less degree of independence, being cut off from it. There was unrest at the limitations of the freedom of that half of the country, and one evening a secret summons reached Sofia suddenly for the Prince to come to Philippolis and take over the government. The Prince did so, the Bulgarian army crossed the

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frontier, united with the militia of Rumelia, and calmly awaited the Turks. But their enemy came from the other side. Servia was in a state of unrest, and King Milan, thinking to settle the country by a war, with a day's notice crossed the Bulgarian frontier at the head of his army. But before he reached Sofia he was confronted by the Bulgarian monarch. In three days the Servians were in full retreat. Alexander, in turn, crossed their frontier, and would have gone on to Belgrade had not the Emperor Francis Joseph sent him word that a further advance would be met by the forces of Austro-Hungary.

When the victorious Prince returned to Sofia, he found deputations from all manner of his subjects and from every section of his country waiting to meet and greet him. The schoolmasters of East Rumelia presented to him an address decorated by the drawing-teacher of their capital. Markvitchka put his best effort into a design portraying the history which the young Prince, by his daring, valour, and personality, had made.

The Prince was restless the night of his enthusiastic reception, and sat up late thinking over his exploits of the past few weeks and the demonstration of his united people. He was a lover of fine art, and when, at two o'clock in the morning, looking over the gifts he had received the day just gone, he came across the schoolmaster's scroll, he sent at that hour to find where the design had been painted. He, the prince of the country, was amazed to find it had been done in Philippolis, and in token of admiration took the first opportunity to send the artist a decoration. Markvitchka had been content in the smaller town, but this compliment created in him an ambition to be appreciated and inspired him to greater effort. Under him the school in Philippolis became the first in art in Bulgaria. In 1887, when the present prince, Ferdinand, visited Philippolis, an art exhibition was organised, the quality of the pictures in which astounded the new monarch. On the spot he purchased two canvases of Markvitchka's. One was a character study, "Sakadji," the name of the waterman who for three-quarters of a century through

"TZIGANE (GIPSY) TYPE OF SOFIA."
BY IVAN MARKVITCHKA.

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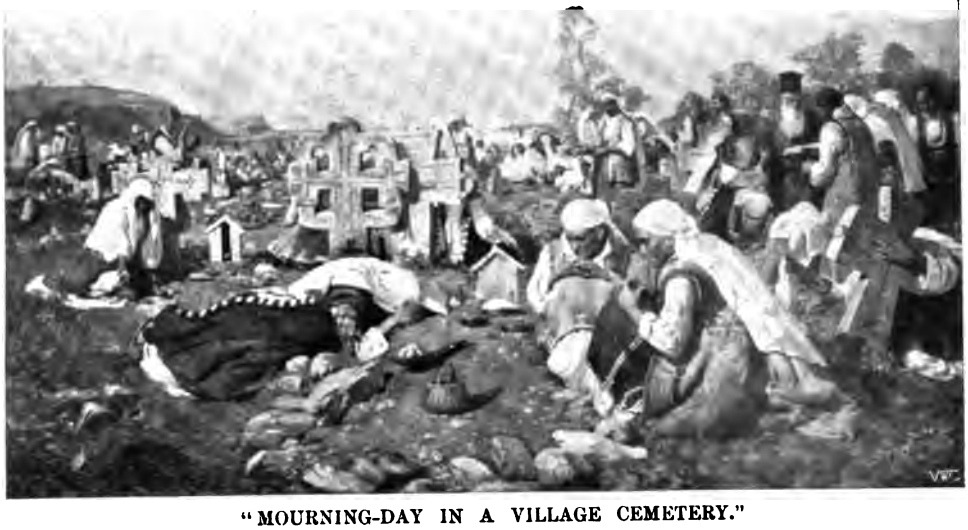

"MOURNING-DAY IN A VILLAGE CEMETERY."
By Ivan Markvitchka.

"THE PURSUIT."
By Ivan Markvitchka.

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Mitoff. Chatz. Markvitchka.

A GROUP IN THE ARTIST'S STUDIO.

Turkish times had made his living carrying water in skins on the sides of his donkey from the river Maritza to peasants who could afford to have their water delivered. The other was market-day in the market-place. The first the Prince took to Sofia, and the second he sent to Euxinograde, his palace on the Black Sea.

Since Prince Ferdinand discovered Markvitchka he has kept him under his eye; and whenever the artist executes a picture which takes the Prince's fancy, it is purchased.

In 1893, a society for the development of Bulgarian art was established at Sofia. Prince Ferdinand and the late Princess, who was herself gifted with the brush, lent every aid to this association. In a short time a publication entitled "Art" was appearing in Sofia, and annual exhibitions were begun. In 1896, an appropriation for an academy was set aside by the "Sombranje," and Markvitchka was called from Philippolis to take the head of the branch in which he was master. Associated with him was the Bulgarian artist, A. Mitoff, and Professor B. Chatz was appointed sculptor. Under the influence of these three men Bulgaria is advancing rapidly in artistic education.

THE WOOD AFTER RAIN.

COOL drip the wind-stirred branches
On damp, clean-smelling mould,
In tremulous streams of silver
Sun-stained to pools of gold;
Grey wood-things creep from hiding,
Full flutes the thrush again—
The wood's a liquid cadence
Of gladness after rain.

EMERY POTTLE.

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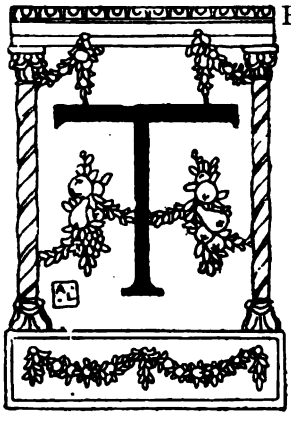
THE COUNTESS DECIDES.

By ROBERT BARR.*



HE arrival of the Countess caused a subdued flutter in the society which frequented the edge of the desert. The Ptolemy Park Hotel, as everyone knows, occupies a depression in the sand a short distance from the Great Pyramid. It is rather a fashionable resort, and you may live somewhat better at the Park than on the sand which is there, as the ancient humorist remarked. It became known that the Countess of Croydon had taken a suite of rooms at the hotel, and the inhabitants thereof wondered whether they would be permitted a sight of this great lady, for she was said to be extremely eccentric, fairly young, admittedly beautiful, and undoubtedly rich. Although she owned a desirable town house, she had never occupied it, and London Society knew nothing of her personality. At last this mysterious young lady was about to issue from her seclusion and brave the publicity of a popular hotel. Naturally the guests of the Ptolemy Park were anxious to see a person so much talked of, and bets stood at ten to one that she would not come. The knowing ones, predicting disappointment, said that on several previous occasions the Countess had been announced to appear at certain social functions in London, but invariably had failed at the last moment. Her apartments had unquestionably been taken, and rooms were at a premium, because the Season had just begun with more than ordinary promise. Cairo was buzzing with excitement over the opening of the great dam at Assouan, and was crowded with distinguished visitors on their way to the ceremony. If Cairo could be likened to a social dam, the Ptolemy Park Hotel might be said to receive the irrigating result of the overflow; and those who had not secured accommodation in advance now applied in vain at the cashier's desk.

The arrival of the Countess was much less imposing than had been generally expected; but then Lord Warlingham himself had come by tramcar a few days before, so it was universally agreed that members of the nobility could not always be counted upon to indulge in the display popularly supposed to pertain to their rank. The Countess drove up to the main entrance in an ordinary hotel carriage, hired for the trip at Cairo. Her sole attendant was one exceedingly plain maid, who inquired tartly of the gold-laced individual who came to open the carriage door if the rooms of the Countess of Croydon were ready, and was obsequiously assured that they were. Gold-lace led the way, and the Countess, looking neither to the right nor the left, followed. The guests had an excellent view of her, and even the women admitted that she was more than handsome, carrying herself with an air of distinction. They agreed, however, that she was not so young as she appeared to be, and hinted that the plain maid must understand the art of making up in a manner that would do credit to an actress. The next problem was: Would she appear at dinner, or would the meals be served in her own sitting-room? The puzzle was solved long before dinner was announced. Every afternoon the denizens of the hotel gathered in the ample hall, in the reading-room, and elsewhere for tea; in fact, for all the difference of living, each one might have been at the Metropole in Brighton, rather than at the base of the Pyramids. Tea was a joyous festival, with much laughter, gossip, and cigarettes in the hall. If you objected to tobacco, you enjoyed your cup in the drawing-room.

The Countess came down the broad stairway with some slight degree of hesitation, as if she feared the multitude of inquiring eyes about to be turned upon her. A tall gentleman, who happened to be passing, looked up at her, then paused and actually appeared

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to be waiting for her. He spoke with a half-laughing diffidence that almost amounted to a stutter, as he fumbled with his eyeglass.

"Although I have never had the pleasure of meeting you, I believe we are by way of being related to each other. My name is Warlingham."

The lady stopped on the lower step, and a look of startled annoyance came for a moment into her eyes. There was a note of indifference, but nevertheless of inquiry, in her voice when at last she said—

"Lord Warlingham?"

"Yes. I think I was not mistaken when I ventured to suggest that our families are connected."

"Very remotely, I fear."

"I am told that the kinship of cousinship extends to the forty-second degree," replied his Lordship, with that depreciatory, audible smile of his which gave him the air of a bashful boy making his first venture towards conversation, although he must have been well past his fortieth year.

The lady laughed nervously.

"I think that when the kinship reaches the forties, the adjective remote becomes justified," she said.

"Possibly. Still, as like clings to like, remoteness has affinity for remoteness; and we are so remote from England that I venture to claim our distant relationship as warrant for my escorting you to a tea-table."

The lady descended the remaining step. Her awkwardness at the unexpected encounter vanished, and they walked together down the hall, at that moment thronged with tea-drinkers. Every one of the small tables was occupied, but Lord Warlingham guided his fair cousin towards a couple of wicker chairs that were empty, although a lone man sat at the table beside them. Lord Warlingham seemed the most popular person in the assembly; women smiled at him as he passed, and men nodded in cheerful comradeship.

In a low voice, his Lordship said to his companion, quite with the confidential manner of an old acquaintance—

"Do you care to be introduced to people, or would you rather not?"

"Oh, I don't mind in the least, if they are nice people."

"Is the recluse to become a woman of fashion?"

"For the time being, at least," replied the Countess, with a slight laugh.

The lone man, when the two approached, rose hastily as if to leave the table to them, but the genial Warlingham begged him to resume his place. Turning to his cousin, he said—

"May I introduce to you Mr. Sanderstead, C.E., F.R.G.S., and so forth, with more letters after his name than there are in it? Lady Croydon."

Sanderstead murmured something as he bowed, his dark face flushing as if he resented the flippancy of the introducer. The lady, noticing his gaunt appearance and tanned cheeks, thought that he was likely one of those newly returned from the finished war; but as they all sat down at the wicker table, Warlingham rattled on and explained.

"Sanderstead and I represent the two opposite poles of human existence. He has just completed the great Nile dams, and is down here to learn what the ancient and honourable Pyramids have to say about it. I represent the useless but ornamental Pyramid, while he represents the useful but unbeautiful dam. He is the ant, I am the grasshopper. He is the bee, and I am——"

"The honeysuckle," broke in the engineer.

"Thanks. I was going to say the butterfly, but I accept the amendment as adding a modern and musical touch."

The Countess seemed to understand intuitively that Sanderstead did not quite relish his Lordship's frivolous badinage, so she turned the direction of the conversation, saying to the latter—

"I supposed, from an item in the newspaper, that you were residing in Cairo this season."

"Yes; but I left there to get out of the rush that has taken place because of the ceremonies at Assouan. Still, this spot is actually Cairo. The Pyramids occupy the relative position with regard to the chief city of Egypt that the Crystal Palace holds with respect to London."

"Really? I hope you haven't fireworks every Thursday night."

"Dear lady, we have fireworks every day from a blazing sun."

"And have you come here to avoid the rush?" she asked of Sanderstead.

"Practically, yes. But not the social rush dreaded by Warlingham. The rush of Nile water has been in my ears this long time past, and I am resting in the eternal silence of the Pyramids."

"How romantic!" exclaimed the Countess.

"Indeed, madam, it is nothing of the

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"The Countess came down the broad staircase with some slight degree of hesitation."

sort," put forth his Lordship. "Sanderstead is troubled with the affliction that haunts the criminal. He flees from the scene of his crime. He has throttled Father Nile and has extinguished the roar that for centuries broke the stillness of the desert. He found a joyous, ambulating, laughing cataract—life embodied in a dancing torrent;

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he has left in its place a graveyard of motionless waters. Not to put too fine a point upon it, Sanderstead is a murderer."

The engineer smiled grimly, but made no comment on the other's rhapsody.

"Aren't you going up for the opening ceremony?" asked the girl, turning to Sanderstead.

"No. The work is done, and that leaves me free for a short time. Now is the opportunity for the ornamental personages, as our friend called them, to take a hand and make speeches. I have been urging Warlingham to go, and almost persuaded him; for he cannot work, so he should not be ashamed to do the ornamental."

"Ah! persuasion was possible yesterday; it is out of the question to-day," said Warlingham in a low voice, with a speaking glance at his handsome companion. She, however, took no notice of either tone or look, but asked with candour apparently innocent—

"Why not to-day? Isn't there plenty of time?"

"It is not a question of time," sighed his Lordship.

"If it is a question of money, Warlingham, I can help you out. I was paid off, you know," said the engineer.

This was an unkind remark, because his Lordship was well known to be in constant lack of the necessity named; so Warlingham flushed slightly and replied with some asperity—

"Thanks, dear boy; but why should I wish to see that curse of so-called modern progress you have placed on a noble river?"

"I didn't curse it, I merely dammed it," replied Sanderstead.

The Countess rose.

"The Pyramids have been waiting a long time for me," she said. "I am going out to view them in the afternoon light."

"It will be the case of age before beauty," said his Lordship, also rising. "May I accompany the beauty to the age?"

Sanderstead, also standing, took his share of the smile with which the lady favoured both; but apparently remembering the adage about three being too many, so far as company is concerned, he sat down again when they had taken their departure, muttering to himself---

"A case of beauty and the beast, *I* should say," which showed he was already envious of the good fortune of the nobleman.

Lord Warlingham made the most of his opportunity. When we reach forty, we know what we want, and lose no time in schoolboy dalliance. He was charmingly urbane, qualified by a slight tinge of sentimentality, and was wide enough awake to see that he made a favourable impression. He regretted that he had not looked up this delightful, if very distant, relative long since, and he resolved to visit Cairo next day and learn something definite regarding her income, even if he had to cable for the information to his legal advisers in London. *They* would know the importance of the facts and the need of their client. Meanwhile, with the deftness of much experience he laid the foundation upon which might be builded either a frivolous flirtation or a serious courtship. It was quite evident that the girl knew as little of fashionable life as if she had just emerged from a convent, and this gave him hope that she had heard nothing of his adventures in quest of an heiress, if she happened to be of a romantic turn of mind, which his slight acquaintance with her caused him to think highly probable.

He regretted that in a heedless moment he had introduced her to Sanderstead, for if his own stay in Cairo were prolonged, or if he went there day after day until his message came from London, he left the field open. If the lady were merely the daughter of a rich nobody, he might rely on the glamour of his title to keep her safe during his absences; but the girl had a title in her own right, so one of his chief assets was discounted. He had seen the young lady's eyes sparkle when the great work up the river was mentioned, and he noticed the look of interest with which she had regarded this newspaper-famed miracle-worker. It was quite possible that she had some silly notions about men who could do things. Many women had. Besides, he could not conceal from himself the fact that the worn engineer had a certain gaunt, bronzed handsomeness which the women of the hotel admired; and besides, he was ten years younger than Warlingham, although perhaps that might not count.

As the days passed, the Countess became the acknowledged leader of society at the Ptolemy Park, and the young lady quite palpably enjoyed her reign hugely, which she had every right to do, because her Paris gowns were numerous and resplendent. It was unaccountable that one so well qualified to shine in polite society should have been a recluse for so long, and predictions were freely made that she would never return to her hermit life.

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The man who had helped to conquer the Nile allowed no grass to grow under his feet in his attempt to conquer the lady, even if grass grew in the desert, which it did not. The frequent absences of Lord Warlingham, who quite correctly stated that annoying matters of business called him to Cairo, and even to Alexandria, gave Richard Sanderstead opportunities of which he was quick to take advantage. These opportunities vanished when the submarine cable at last fulfilled its destiny. The news was well worth the money it cost, for the lady's income proved to be between £14,000 and £15,000 a year. Even a man with the expensive tastes of Warlingham could do with that, as he remarked to himself. Nevertheless, two words at the end of the cablegram disquieted him. They were: "Wait letter." He wondered what the letter could contain that it needed this courier of caution. Perhaps there was insanity in the Croydon family, which might account for the lady's avoidance of publicity. Still, she showed no sign of it, and, anyhow, that would not matter if the money were right. Hard cash has no delusions, whatever may be the mental attributes of its owner. Perhaps, however, the money might be tied up in some annoying manner, which would be a more serious, but probably not an insurmountable difficulty. He would chance it and wait no letter. That confounded engineer was making the running, and his advances were far from being discouraged by their object. Hang it all! when the letter arrived, it might be too late; whereas when he secured her, he could always find a way of retreat if the contents of the letter made retreat necessary. The nobility often sued for divorce, but never for breach of promise. The latter was a form of litigation monopolised by the lower classes, so he was safe in any case.

The moon was growing older, and the nights were becoming like chastened silvery days. The Countess declared that she never before knew what moonlight really was, and Lord Warlingham urged her to view the Pyramids as Melrose should be viewed. As the night was chilly, he advised wraps, and his attitude was one of fond protection, which is not without its influence upon the feminine heart. The moon shone upon the right-hand cheek of the Sphinx, bestowing additional mystery upon that inscrutable face. It lit the eastern side of the Great Pyramid, and thither the two bent their steps. Their conference was disturbed now and then by unexpected Arabs who seemed to rise out of the sand to demand contributions; but one glance at his Lordship's countenance sent them to earth again. They knew him these many days, and had made no money out of him, so even their insistent clamour was stilled when they recognised the Englishman whose imperturbability had always baffled them. Their unlooked-for advent somewhat startled the lady, but Warlingham made some jocular allusion about those classical Johnnies, don't you know, who sprang full armed from the earth like "I forget the beggars' names," he added, "but you know the chaps I mean"; and so the pair came unmolested to the eastern base of the Great Pyramid, and he helped her over broken stones up a step or two, where they sat together facing the distant Nile and the still more distant moon. He sat very near to her and tried to capture her hand, but at that moment came the necessity of gathering her wraps more closely about her, and he gave up the quest for the moment. Even so *blasé* a man as Lord Warlingham never had a better setting for a proposal than was his fortune in this case. The glamour of the moon filled the lustrous eyes of the lady beside him. Behind them rose this great monument of Egypt's power; Egypt, whose queen was a very goddess of love: Egypt, at one time the treasury of the world, and, before his Lordship's mind, even at that moment floated the golden glow of fifteen thousand sovereigns per annum. In front of them stretched the languorous East. Every requirement of situation was satisfied; and, after all, she was deucedly pretty, as his Lordship admitted when he glanced sideways at her as she sat near him on the elevated fifth step of the Great Pyramid. The influence of past ages was upon her. She gazed to the East as the Sphinx gazed to the North, and as silently. Hitherto she had spoken almost pertly, one might say, were not such a saying inexcusable when she held the rank she did. A *real* countess cannot speak pertly; a king can do no wrong. Lord Warlingham drew a deep breath as he recognised the perfection of his stage management—a deep breath which he modified into a tender sigh. He wished he knew the girl's Christian name, so that he might begin tenderly; but as he was ignorant on that point, he was compelled to use her title, which he recognised was bad form, as if a friend had addressed him as "your Lordship."

"Countess," he began solemnly, "on our first meeting you held that our relationship was a very distant one."

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She almost gasped, and the enchantment of the Orient faded from her face as she turned it upon him. A humorous Western twinkle came into her eyes and somewhat chilled the sentimentality so well portrayed by his deep, tremulous voice.

"Well, if we *are* relations, we are certainly very close ones at this moment." Whereat she shifted a little further along the fifth step toward the south. "To tell the truth, I had forgotten you were here." She laughed lightly.

This might have discouraged a less adept lover, but it merely proclaimed to Lord Warlingham that he must put his best foot forwards. It also banished from his mind those two words on the cablegram in his pocket, "Wait letter," which had been rather haunting him during the evening.

"Countess, I was never more serious in my life. We have known each other but a short time, yet this brief period has been to me a—a——"

"'An interval of bliss hitherto undreamed in my—in my intercourse with your siren sex.' Is that what you wish to say? My dear cousin Warlingham, is this—*is* this a proposal that is on the way?"

The lady clasped her hands and leaned towards him, the witchery of mischief in her dancing eyes. Lord Warlingham was aghast. He had never met anything like this before. Yet, to his credit be it said that he held himself well in hand, and did not take quite justifiable offence at the flippant reception of what he knew was a great honour on his part.

"Cousin," he said, with a solemnity equal to that of the Pyramid behind him, "you are pleased to laugh at me. To me, however, it is the most fateful moment of my existence. I freely admit that I have led a somewhat aimless life. This has doubtless been my own fault. Yet not entirely. If a man has a guiding star, his course through——"

"Oh! I read somewhere that one corner of this Pyramid points to the North Star. Do you know if that is true?"

"I must confess I have not the slightest idea."

"Let us find out. It must be one of the southern corners, of course."

She was about to spring from the fifth step, but he laid a restraining hand upon hers, which, in this instance, had not the opportunity to seek refuge in adjusting the wraps.

"Never mind the North Star," he said.

"But it is a fixed star; just the one to be a reliable guide for an erratic man. Are you sure it isn't the star you are longing for?"

"I am quite sure. The star I am longing for shines from your eyes. As I said in the beginning, you spoke of our distant relationship. I wish to make our relationship the closest bond that can bind two human beings together."

"You speak a great deal about our mythical relationship, Lord Warlingham. I have lived all my life in Devonshire; you have lived much of your life in London. Well, the Great Western Railway has a speedy and excellent service. Why did you never look up your lone cousin before?"

"How could I know?"

"How could you know *what?* Did you think we had nothing to eat in the house? Or do you mean that I am so transcendently beautiful and charming. You ought to know that people say I am decidedly eccentric. Some give it a harsher term. What is it you could not know?"

"I could not know that you were the one of all this world for me, until I had met you?"

"I see." The lady nodded several times, while he gazed at her with ill-concealed apprehension. "This, then, *is* a proposal, as I suspected? Well, I have never had a proposal, and naturally I am somewhat at a loss how to act. I am, nevertheless, delighted to think that the first time I have appeared, as it were, in public, I have been honoured by so distinguished a person as Lord Warlingham."

"I ask you to be my wife. What is your answer?" His Lordship was piqued by her nonchalant reception of what she had described as an honour, and not being a schoolboy, as has been remarked, he thought it best to bring the question to a definite issue.

"Should a person answer immediately? It is so important, you know. In penny novelettes they always ask for time. Do you ever read penny novelettes?"

"No," he replied gruffly.

"They are *very* interesting."

"I suppose they are." For the first time during this unsatisfactory conversation, the fear penetrated through his Lordship's armour of self-conceit that this accursed dam-builder had won the fortune while he was waiting for information regarding its extent. He leaned over towards her and said in a low voice—

"Am I too late?"

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"I don't think so," she replied brightly, glacing up at the moon, which had risen perceptibly since they had taken their seats. "It cannot be more than half past ten, or perhaps eleven. But don't you think it is getting more and more chilly?"

"Yes," said his Lordship, with a sigh that was genuine. "It has been chilly from the first."

The Countess laughed merrily.

"'I didn't curse it, I merely dammed it.'"

"Does that refer to me or to the thermometer? You are rather bright at times. You remind me of the moon—the glorious moon. There is a compliment for you. Do you remember that song in 'Pinafore'—

"Fair moon, to thee I sing,
Sweet regent of the heavens"?

"Yes. I remember it," he replied gloomily, "and in the words of the last two lines of your verse, I wonder why everything is at sixes and at sevens."

"How long ago 'Pinafore' seems!" she said with a sigh, folding her hands on her lap. "I suppose that it is the Pyramids that call it to mind."

"Madam, you have not answered my question."

"Neither I have. I shall make up for the delay by giving you the choice of two answers. The first is 'No'; the second is 'Wait.'"

"Why should I wait?"

"No reason at all. Then 'No' is your answer."

"That is a very good reason, so I shall wait."

"Just as you please. Let us get to the hotel, or even my chaperonage will not protect you from gossiping tongues. Come."

Before he could move to her assistance, she had run lightly over the rocky declivity and was standing on the sand awaiting his more cautious descent. Then they walked back to the hotel together.

The result of this conference was exceedingly unsatisfactory to Lord Warlingham; and the more he thought of it, the less he liked it. On several following nights he tried to induce the Countess to accompany him again to their former trysting-place, but the lady seemed to have lost interest in the moonlight. One evening she had dinner served in her own room and, although he waited for her in the hall, she did not put in an appearance. He went to the *table d'hôte* alone and afterwards searched in vain for the lady. He thought, at first, that she had not come down; but as he wandered about the place, he noticed that Sanderstead also was missing, and he muttered maledictions under his breath. At this moment a waiter approached and handed him a letter, which he tore open and read with some eagerness. Then he stared out of the window on the moonlit road.

"Well, I'm blessed!" he said.

His impatience fell away from him like a discarded cloak, and he sat down in one of the armchairs, lighting a cigar.

"Just in the nick of time!" he muttered, with a sigh of great relief.

* * * * *

The Countess, after an early dinner, slipped down the stair, through the hall, and out of the hotel. All the guests were at *table d'hôte*, and she hoped thus to depart unseen. But on this occasion she had to deal with a man of mathematical mind, who left nothing to chance, as did the easy-going Warlingham. As the waiter placed a plate of chicken before

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Richard Sanderstead, he whispered, unheard by even the next neighbour: "Just gone out, sir." Sanderstead rose at once and very quietly left the chattering table. Half a dinner is better than no meal.

The Countess walked straight south, across the desert, looking neither to the right nor the left, deep in thought, with head down. It was a rough road, yet she walked fast. Once or twice she half thought she heard other footsteps than her own, and at last a distinct crunch on the gravel brought her suddenly out of her reverie. She turned quickly and stood still, startled. The moonlight fell full on the spare figure and swart, determined face of the man at that moment in her mind.

"Why are you following me?"

"Because your excursion, unwise in daylight, is doubly dangerous at night," replied Sanderstead.

"Who made you my guardian?"

"I am self-appointed."

"I ask you to return."

"Willingly, if you come with me."

"I refuse."

"Then so do I."

"Do you mean to say that you will force your company on me when I forbid it?"

"I shall not force my company on you; but I'll follow you to Khartoum if you go that far."

"A gentleman would not do so."

"Some would and some wouldn't; all depends."

"I wish to be alone with my thoughts."

"I shall not disturb them. I didn't begin this conversation."

"Oh, very well," she replied, with offended dignity, turning from him and walking rapidly to the south again, as if she hoped to outdistance him; but he kept the space undiminished between them, with no show of effort. They had gone thus perhaps a mile when Sanderstead sprang forward and passed her. Before she could protest she was somewhat taken aback by seeing a horseman emerge at a gallop from behind a sand-dune and draw up before them, the beautiful horse, at a word, bracing its slender fore-legs and standing like a bronze statue. The Arab had his rifle ready, but catching the gleam of Sanderstead's revolver, he placed his own weapon peacefully athwart the saddle. Sanderstead spoke quietly in Arabic, and the horseman answered with something more of deference in his tone than his attitude had at first betokened. Sanderstead strode forward and patted the lovely arched neck of the horse, complimenting its owner on its possession. With a touch of the heel and a sweeping salutation the Arab disappeared as speedily as he had come.

"What did he say?" she asked breathlessly.

"Oh, he just asked the way to Piccadilly Circus."

The Countess drew herself up; and as the moonlight now flooded her, while he had his back to it, he saw the deep frown that marred her fair face.

"Sir, you are insulting. If you think because we are alone you can treat me like a child, you are mistaken."

"Alone!" he laughed, then checked himself. "By Jove! you *do* look like a countess, after all!" he cried, with unfeigned admiration, as he gazed upon the girl. Her defiant manner changed instantly.

"What do you mean by *that?*" she gasped.

"It was merely an expression of my esteem for you. I think it is time to turn, you know. We will leave Khartoum for another night."

"You expected me to lose myself; but you forget we are in a land that has Pyramids for finger-posts."

"Where are they?"

She swept a glance around the northern horizon. Although the moon shone with undiminished brightness, the air in the distance seemed thickened, or else she had travelled further than she thought. There were no Pyramids in sight.

"I'll soon lead you to them," cried the Countess, undaunted, as she set out resolutely toward the north.

And she did. When their dim outline appeared, she pointed in triumph, crying: "There!"

"You followed your shadow," he said; "an excellent guide until the moon gets low. I've been following a shadow, too, which I wish to change into substance. Countess, I love you. Will you marry me?"

"How abrupt you are! and what a stand-and-deliver tone! Is that because you carry a pistol?"

"I am not nearly so abrupt as you imagine. I have been meditating this appeal for a long time; and as the Pyramids begin to appear, my opportunity begins to vanish."

"You know nothing of me."

"I know enough."

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"Well, if we *are* relations, we are certainly very close ones at this moment.'"

"That does not sound in the least complimentary. I will give you an answer as abrupt as your question. Yes, I will marry you—if you are rich."

"If I am rich? Are you so fond of money as all that?"

"Ah! I said you knew nothing of me."

"Let us sit down here and discuss the question."

In the desert are numerous hollows, some deep and some shallow. On the edge of one of these they sat down in the sand, like a pair of children at the seaside.

"Rich!" he reiterated. "What do you call rich?"

"I don't know," she answered dreamily, her chin resting on her hand, contemplating him with a steady gaze that he found somewhat disconcerting.

"Are *you* rich?" he asked.

"Don't you know I am?"

"I have heard it so stated."

"Then why did you ask?"

"I wished to learn your idea of riches. How much have you got?"

"I don't know," she repeated in the same nonchalant tone.

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"You have some idea. Make a guess."

"One hundred thousand pounds," she hazarded.

"Oh! is that all? I have a hundred and twenty thousand."

"Have you, really?"

"That is to say, for the past five years or so I have earned an average of thirty thousand pounds per annum. That equals the income of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, or thereabouts, in Consols."

"Oh! that's not quite the same thing. If a bridge you were building collapsed upon you, there was an end of your hundred and twenty thousand."

"The bridges I build don't collapse."

"I am *so* glad."

"But banks containing money do. I think we're about equal on the money question."

"I don't really care about riches, yet they have been the bugbear of my life. I distrust everyone. I refuse to be married for my money, therefore I demand equality of wealth. I thought this little dip into society, such as it is, might dissolve my difficulties. It has not done so."

"Why don't you give your money away?"

"I know something of the comfort of wealth, and I don't know the value of what I might get in exchange. It would be a case of flying to others that I know not of."

"Look at me and see if you think it would be worth while."

"How conceited you are! I have been doing nothing else but look at you."

"And the distrust continues?"

"Not while I look. If I gave my money away, what could I do until the undoubted man came along?"

"You would make an admirable actress."

The chin raised from her hand, and the dreamy expression gave place to one of alert alarm.

"Why do you say that?"

"Because you are so beautiful—the whole theatre would fall in love with you."

"I don't believe that is what you mean."

"I assure you it is. Don't let money stand between us. Tie it up in a hard knot so that I can't touch it, and marry me."

"Excellent plan! As if the man I married could not get every penny he wanted from me! However, I'll think over it and let you know. Come; we must be journeying."

"Better take the plunge now, Countess."

"No. I distrust—myself. Here we are building on a foundation of sand; surely an engineer knows how unstable *that* is; and we are constructing a house of moonbeams, also unsubstantial. I must think in the clear light of day and in a modern room furnished by Maple. Come along."

In the hall of the hotel she met Lord Warlingham pacing up and down. She had asked Sanderstead to allow her to enter the hotel alone, which, somehow, the young man regarded as an encouraging omen. Warlingham stopped in his perambulations and faced her. The usual welcoming smile on his lips was absent.

"Madam," he said, "I wish a few words with you in private."

"Not to-night," she almost whispered, shrinking from him.

"It must be to-night and now," he said harshly. "If you imagine that it is to be a repetition of my proposal, you may calm your fears. It is a matter of business."

"Very well. Come to my sitting-room."

They went upstairs together, her waiting-maid following her with the wraps and glancing sourly at her escort.

"I wish to speak with you alone. Please ask your maid to leave the room."

"You may speak quite freely before Parker. Won't you sit down?"

But his Lordship remained standing. The Countess sank into an armchair with a sigh of weariness.

"It shall be as you please, but I advise you to hear me alone. Servants gossip."

"Parker never does," said the girl, with her eyes closed.

And, indeed, Parker looked forbidding enough as she stood behind the chair of her mistress, seeming the last one on earth to indulge in confidences.

"I have received a letter from London, and with your permission will read an extract.

"'It is well known that the Countess intended to winter in Egypt; but we are credibly informed that she changed her mind at the last moment, as she has so often done before, and we believe she is still at her place in Devonshire. If there is anyone in Cairo calling herself the Countess of Croydon, her claim to that title should be subjected to critical scrutiny?'

"Now, madam, what have you to say? *Are* you the Countess of Croydon?"

The young lady's eyes had opened as he read. Parker's countenance remained unmoved, as if she were a feminine Sphinx.

"What is the rest of the letter?" asked the girl.

"That is neither here nor there."

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"It is quite evidently there. May I suggest that it is an inventory of the Countess's possessions? Are you chagrined to learn that your proposal was wasted on the undeserving?"

"I ask you if you are the Countess of Croydon?"

"I reply that I never said I was."

"That reply will not do, madam. The honour of my family is at stake."

"Your family has nothing to do with me."

"I begin to suspect that my family has indeed nothing to do with one who pretended to be a member of it."

"Your memory fails you. I disclaimed all relationship when you asserted it."

"I asserted it under the supposition that you were the Countess."

"Very well. No harm is done. I did not take advantage of your offer. I never said I was the Countess; and so long as I pay my hotel bill, no one has a right to interfere."

"You are very much mistaken. Such masquerading is not to be tolerated."

"I am leaving here the day after to-morrow, and I sail from Suez a week from to-day. I ask you to say nothing of this until I am gone."

"I refuse."

"Then this confession must be made in my own way, and I must choose the person who is to set the gossips a-prattling."

"I agree, so long as it is done at once."

"Parker, go down and ask Mr. Sanderstead to come here."

The maid departed, and the alleged Countess leaned back in her chair.

"Who are you?" asked his Lordship, but the girl made no reply. A moment later, Sanderstead came in.

"Will you read to Mr. Sanderstead the extract from your London letter that you read to me?"

"Mr. Sanderstead has nothing to do with my correspondence. You were to make your confession, as I understood your proposal."

"Lord Warlingham has discovered that I am not the Countess of Croydon."

"Oh, is that all," said Sanderstead. "I knew it almost from the beginning."

The lady sat up now, very wide awake.

"How did you know it?" she asked in surprise.

"Well, you had none of those middle-class deficiencies of manner which I have often deplored in the titled persons I have met. I recognised at once that you were a lady."

"Then that is what you hinted at twice this evening. I wish to say before you both that I meant no harm, and did not see at the first what complications might ensue. I may say at once that I had the Countess's permission to do what I have done; indeed, it was owing to her urging that I did it. I can prove that to you, Lord Warlingham, in her own handwriting. Often I have persuaded her to emerge into the world, and as often she has refused at the last moment, much to my disappointment. On this occasion I confess I wept when I found her determined not to go to Egypt. With great generosity she insisted that I should take her place. I admit that I have done wrong technically, perhaps, but I deny that I have done any real harm, and I have asked Lord Warlingham to say nothing until I sail from Suez, a week from to-day."

"Of course, nothing will be said either then or after," proclaimed Sanderstead stoutly.

Lord Warlingham stood silent for a moment; then, his anger being somewhat cleared away, he echoed—

"Of course."

The lady sprang to her feet with radiant face.

"You are both very good to me. Lord Warlingham, I ask your forgiveness, and I deeply appreciate your promise of silence. Won't you shake hands with the adventuress and say you are sorry I sail so soon?"

"Indeed, madam," said Warlingham, cordially taking her hand, "I do say so with all my heart, and I wish you well."

"And are you sorry, Mr. Sanderstead?" she cried, with a touch of fear and pathos in the eyes she turned upon him.

"No, I am not."

The lady caught her breath, and the colour left her cheeks.

"Oh, I say, Sanderstead!" protested his Lordship.

"Why should I be sorry when I sail on the same steamer, if the lady permits me?" He took her hand and raised it to his lips.

Lord Warlingham beamed upon them with a smile half tender, half comical. He was an experienced man and knew the signs.

"Is this a case of 'Bless you, my children'?" he asked.

"Again, if the lady permits."

The colour came back redoubled and brought with it a smile to the lady's lips.

* * * * *

Yet she *was* the Countess, after all.

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FIVES.

By EUSTACE MILES,

Amateur Champion at Tennis and at Racquets (1902), *Author of "Racquets, Tennis, and Squash" (Isthmian Library).*

Photographs by Mason and Basèbè, Cambridge.

A FIVES GLOVE.

WHEN modern researches seem to be overthrowing the laws with which Science had been so pleased, such as the law of the permanence of matter, one law appears unchanged—indeed, we may say that it is more firmly established now than ever—and that is the law of differentiation; and it holds good also for the games with the hand, ball, bat, floor, walls, and other paraphernalia. Out of a rude, unsystematic chaos of possibilities, not nearly exhausted yet, came many casual games which do not all survive to-day; but those which do survive are definite and fixed, so that they may survive still longer. They have their written rules, if not their stereotyped implements and dimensions of courts and so on. Fives is more or less definite and fixed, and it is sure to survive, because, to use the words of the Psalmist, "it is so comfortable"—at the time, and in its after-effects.

We need not stay long over its history. At first, perhaps, people caught the ball and threw it. This seems to be the nature of some Greek and Roman ball-games; and there is a Tennis handicap by which one player catches the ball and then throws it, while the other uses his racket; the player who catches the ball and throws it generally wins. In Cricket also this play survives in the fielding. In Pelota the ball is held for an appreciable time within the implement, which is a kind of scoop. In Lacrosse also the ball is held before it is flung. In Vigoro-fielding the ball is often caught before it is hit. In Lawn Tennis the ball during the stroke rests on the racket for a longer time than at Racquets, which has probably the smartest and snappiest stroke of all. Eton Fives allows the ball to be held for a far longer time than Rugby Fives does. But instead of the primitive method, there have grown up a number of games in which the

THE PEPPER-BOX OF AN ETON FIVES COURT; FROM THE FRONT WALL.

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ball is not caught and then thrown or hit, but is hit directly.

The various games have diverged according to their implement—one of the earliest implements being the stick with which one hit the stone in the road; according to the ball, which might be heavy or light, large or small, according to the court, etc., which might have in it either a line on a wall, or a raised mound or other obstacle in the middle, and might be a clear space, or might be surrounded by walls. Then, again, the game has diverged according to whether the ball was stationary or moving when hit. The stationary ball is a characteristic of Billiards, Croquet, and Golf; the moving ball of Cricket, Lawn Tennis, and Racquets.

COMPARATIVE SIZES OF THE BALLS OF RACQUETS (TOP), ETON FIVES (LEFT), RUGBY FIVES (RIGHT), LAWN TENNIS (MIDDLE).

Fives is marked out from most other games by its implement, the Fives-glove, which shows a stage between the bare hand and the bat or racket. Indeed, there is a record of a game played by royal personages centuries ago, one using the hand, the other the racket. As an intermediate stage, players used a glove over which tendons were stretched to give elasticity to the blow.

Fives might have begun as a sort of game when players alternately hit a ball against a plain wall. The old Belvedere Racquet-court shows this game with a racket, there being network on three sides of the plain wall, but no corners, and no side or back walls, and only boundary-lines there. But in quite early times there might have been felt a fascination about playing in a corner, the two walls giving a variety of angles. The late Mr. Julian Marshall suggested that Fives originated in play up against the main wall of a Tennis-court. That, probably, is one way in which it started.

Now the game is more or less stereotyped. The balls, the gloves, the courts, the scoring, and the rules are all improved, and all definite and good. There is an advantage in this uniformity, in spite of the fact that the game is not as good as it might be. If

BEGINNING TO SERVE AT ETON FIVES.

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there is a better game, as I think, it will prevail some day, because there is a country called America, which tries new things and sticks to the best.

At present, however, the old and established game is excellent for a large number of reasons. Those who have seen experts play Eton Fives will agree that the positions of such players as Ford, the Lyttletons, and others are as graceful as those of many ancient Greek statues.

A LEFT-HAND HIGH VOLLEY AT ETON FIVES.

The play is pleasant for the player as well as for the spectator. Then it is short, especially in the single form of the game, and cheap, especially in the four. The possibility of a single or a four or a three (which is perhaps the best game of all) gives it a certain variety, another variety coming from the different kinds of courts.

One of the earliest courts was the Eton court, which was at first merely a part of the outside wall of the Eton Chapel, with a projecting buttress. Another kind is the Harrow Squash-court, with its hazards, such as the pipes and the windows. The Winchester kind has a small buttress or tambour on the left side wall. I have seen a court with only one wall, and netting round it like the old Belvedere Racquet-court mentioned just now. At my first private school at Hampstead the wall of the house had another wall projecting at right angles to it; among the hazards were a pipe, a ledge, and a window (wired over). At Marlborough the courts have three walls—that is to say, a front and two side, but no back walls. At Rugby and Cambridge they have four walls, some of the Rugby courts being open. There is at least one court in existence with a movable roof, so that in fine weather the sky may shine down upon the players.

A LOW LEFT-HAND STROKE AT RUGBY FIVES.

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A VERY LOW RIGHT-HAND STROKE AT RUGBY FIVES.

But, whatever the court, the game of Fives has certain admirable features. First, there is the stooping to get up the low balls; and in the Eton court there is also the step to give extra exercise for the liver. In all games there is a healthy stretching of the extremities, and healthy turning and twisting of the trunk. There is alertness and readiness to move the two sides of the body independently, so that the left side gets at least as much play as the right—play, not together *with* the right hand, as in batting at Cricket or in driving at Golf, but *instead of* the right hand. The hands themselves are hardened, yet develop a finer sense of touch. Throughout there is needed a certain control, and at Eton Fives a considerable amount of *finesse*. At Rugby rather than Eton Fives there is need of endurance and a good wind.

The space required is quite small, and there is no reason why there should not be evening play in cities, by artificial light. In closed courts there is an absolute independence of weather. Fives prepares for and supplements other games, and Boxing and Fencing. One must observe the opponent, and, in a four game, work with the partner. In the three game, one has alternately the independent work by oneself and the co-operative work with one's partner.

The rules of play are simple enough, the principle being that A wins a rally whenever B fails to return the ball above the play-line before the ball has bounced twice. If A is "in," he scores a point or ace. If B is "in," A, by winning the rally, goes "in" instead. The game is for fifteen points. Details of scoring need not trouble us here.

The play might be more satisfactory, I think, if certain suggestions were adopted, and the first of the suggestions would be a

A RIGHT-HAND VOLLEY AT RUGBY FIVES.

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more frequent use of the three game. Suppose that there are three players, A, B, and C; perhaps the fourth player, D, has not turned up. Now, the single game is too violent for many people, the four game is not violent enough, the three game is the mean between the two extremes, with the advantages of both. A plays first against B and C; B plays next against A and C; C against A and B. So it is "all against all." While each is playing against the other two, he has hard work; otherwise he has a period of comparative ease.

The second change might be the use of softer balls occasionally; the men use them, for example, at Columbia University in America. These softer balls last longer and make the game cheaper. They also give harder work and lessen the time of exercise for the very busy. But, of course, they have not the Spartan "manliness" of the hard-ball game.

We suggest, as we have often suggested before, the use of all kinds of rooms. Several friends of ours use their stable and harness-rooms for the purpose. More than one friend uses his roof. Others use the outside walls of their houses or stables. To erect a court on an unused piece of ground would be a matter of little expense if a dozen men subscribed; and if a dozen ladies hired the court in the daytime, there would be scarcely any individual expense at all.

To vary the game, many hazards should be used or devised. Of course, a stableyard would naturally have its own hazards—the windows, etc. Otherwise, movable hazards, triangular pieces of wood and so on, could be introduced, as in the Squash-courts of the Bath Club.

Then, I think, there should be a movable play-line. Skilful players would like it low, so that they might make killing strokes. Beginners would prefer it high, so that they might have long rallies and plenty of fun. By a system of pegs and holes the play-line can easily be made movable.

It seems that once the player who was "in" sent up his own service, and was not "fed" by his opponent. Now, a great deal of time is wasted, because, if the opponent sends a ball which you do not like, you have the right to ask him to send the ball you do like, and to wait till he sends it. If this is the case, why should you not send your own ball as you like, and then be compelled to take it? At Eton Fives I have seen a man have two, three, and even six unsuccessful shots at taking a ball thrown up by the

BEGINNING TO SERVE AT RUGBY FIVES.

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A STROKE OFF THE BACK WALL; RUGBY FIVES AT CAMBRIDGE.

man who was "in." This is sheer waste of time. Why should the striker-out not be compelled to throw up his own ball and take it himself?

The game would be much more enjoyed, because much better played, if those who were keen about it took up its movements as a form of physical culture. Let them go through the different movements of an imaginary game in their bedrooms. This is magnificent exercise for the body, because of the above-mentioned stoopings, extensions, twists, turns, etc. It gives an exercise not altogether unlike Boxing. If people sacrificed two minutes a day to this imaginary play, they would be less likely to leave off the game itself because they were out of training or out of practice. Certainly they would raise their standard of play by keeping their muscles flexible. Of course, this would not be practice in timing the ball, nor in tactics, but it would be practice in making the right movement when the ball came. It would also be an outlet for superfluous energy.

But, above all, we need hundreds of city and country clubs for evening play. One person cannot afford a court; a hundred easily could; so could Government; so could philanthropic millionaires.

And now as to materials and dimensions, in order that the reader may estimate the costs for himself or get an estimate from some builder. Let us begin with the materials.

The hard balls cost less than sixpence each, the gloves cost a few shillings. It is a good plan, by the way, to put antiseptic plaster on the hands in case of bruises. Shoes cost anything from a few shillings up to thirty shillings a pair. We need not give prices for flannels, though Fives without them is an unwholesome game.

The court is the most serious item in cases where an already existing wall, or two or three walls, cannot be utilised. With hard balls the ordinary wooden court is too noisy, unless the edges of the wood on the front wall are turned towards the players, as they are in the St. Paul's School Racquet-court, in America. But the cement courts are without doubt far the best, even if they are far the most expensive. Mr. Bickley, the inventor of the best cement for Racquet, Tennis, Squash, and Fives courts, is of opinion that the court at Lord's (forty-two by twenty-four feet) is too large; whereas another court which he has made (twenty-one by thirteen and a half) is too small; and he cites a court in Hampshire (thirty-four by twenty) as a good measurement. As to the size of the walls, sixteen feet gives better ventilation, but twelve feet is almost sufficient. In the "Isthmian" volume on "Racquets, Tennis, and Squash," I have shown that there is no need for expensive cement all over the court. A wooden surface in certain parts will economise money. There should be ventilation below

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the play-line on the front wall, as there is at the Bath Club, which certainly should be taken as having model courts for evening play. On the back wall there should be a line above which balls must not be hit; or, as in Mr. W. H. Grenfell's court at Taplow, there might be a line on the floor, and any ball from the back wall bouncing between that and the front wall should count as "out."

My only objection to the ordinary court for evening play is that it is lighted directly. True, at the Merion Club, near Philadelphia, the light is concealed from the eyes of the players; but still, nothing can equal the indirect light thrown up on to the ceiling, and thence down on to the floor—for we must think of our eyes and the eyes of the next generation.

If anyone has built such a court, he can use it for other purposes besides Fives: for example, he can use it for Squash, and, with a net across the middle, for Badminton. He can use it for Boxing and Fencing. He can use it for ordinary exercises. If it has a movable roof, it can serve as an air and light bath for the morning. Many other advantages will suggest themselves; and we cannot close this article without a word with regard to our national stupidity, our want of proportion, in our designs of houses.

Attention has often been called to the fact that we generally use our best room as a drawing-room for visitors during a few hours of the day. The nursery should be the best room of all; then should come the sleeping-rooms. Scarcely, if at all, behind them in importance is the recreation-room. The less country life we have, the more play and physical education we need in our houses. It is amazing to consider that, out of the millions of houses in so-called civilised countries, scarcely a few hundreds have their own little room made sacred to exercise. Is it not every bit as important as the kitchen, and far more important than the drawing-room? Why should not one have a plain little room, with a line, let us say two feet from the floor, on one of the walls. Against this wall one could play Fives or some other game. When one felt disinclined for that, one could practise another kind of exercise. A Punch-ball could be suspended from above, and several other simple kinds of apparatus could be easily moved in or out of the little room according to need. But of all the exercises, few will equal Fives, because it is brief and exciting, and good for most of the important muscles of the body, and a form of play that is manly without being brutal.

THE DAFFODILS.

THE daffodils have my heart this year!
Even the roses shall sigh in vain.
I have hid my heart with a smile and tear
In the daffodils brushed with wind and rain.
Oh, I loved the rose and the summer moon,
And the thorn that grew on the mountain's brow;
But my steps have turned to the old true tune,
And my heart is with the daffodils now!

The daffodils have my heart to-day!
Even the city shall sigh for me.
I have turned my steps to the moorland way,
To the daffodils, wantoning wild and free.
Oh, I loved the roads that were hard to wend,
And the fame that lay in the sweat of the brow,
And the sigh, and the smile, and the soft-tongued friend;
But my heart is with the daffodils now!

The daffodils have my heart this year!
Have, and hold it, and keep it fast!
Oh, a rose shall go, when the summer's here,
To the friends that pass when the rose is past,
And the flower of Fame to be tost and torn
In the London rabble, and rush, and row;
But my heart to the lad that is country-born,
For my heart is in the daffodils now!

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

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THE GARDEN OF LIES.

By JUSTUS MILES FORMAN,*

Author of "Journeys End," "Cupid's House Party," etc.

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING CHAPTERS.—Denis Mallory, a reckless but chivalrous young Irishman, living in Paris, is suddenly involved in a strange chain of circumstance through having, quite light-heartedly, undertaken to impersonate the reigning Prince of Novodnia, at the request of the doctor who is treating the young Princess for loss of memory. The Prince has but lately come to the throne of Novodnia, as the result of an extraordinary series of deaths. So improbable has his succession previously been considered that he has been allowed to marry outside royal circles, and is now the husband of an American girl of great beauty and considerable wealth. On his accession to the throne, the Prince's supporters in his faction-ridden kingdom become anxious about the succession. His wife not being of royal rank, no child of hers could succeed to the throne. The Prince, however, resolutely refuses to divorce the Princess Eleanor, and one result of his loyalty to her is that while he is obliged to remain in Novodnia to meet and combat intrigue and faction of various kinds, his beautiful wife is living in Paris under the care of the great brain-specialist, Sir Gavin MacKenzie. The marriage of the Prince with Eleanor took place in America, and it was on the way from the church that a carriage accident caused the injuries which kept the Princess still in a state of unconsciousness when, a fortnight later, the Prince was called home to Novodnia to ascend the throne. The Princess has now recovered her bodily health, but without regaining any memory of recent events, even her own marriage being unknown to her. On learning of her marriage, the Princess demands to see her husband, and imagines a conspiracy to keep him from her. Indeed, she inquires for him so persistently that the doctors fear for her reason unless he comes to her. This, of course, is impossible, and the position is so critical that it is decided by Colonel Von Altdorf, Chancellor of Carlo III., Creighton, who tells the story, and Sir Gavin MacKenzie, to introduce Denis Mallory to Eleanor as her husband; and just as the young couple are really falling in love with one another, news arrives that the Prince is on his way to Paris to claim his wife. Prince Karl loves his wife so dearly that though he is told of the deception that has been practised in order to preserve his wife's reason, he is overcome with jealousy on seeing Mallory and Eleanor together in the garden. He creates a violent scene, which leads to a duel between himself and Denis. Both are good swordsmen, but Denis Mallory eventually disarms the Prince, who falls fainting, but unwounded, to the ground. When Prince Karl regains consciousness, he is thoroughly aware of the misunderstanding into which he has fallen, but firmly refuses to leave Paris without his wife. He is, however, prevailed upon to promise that he will not insist upon an interview with the Princess, as the shock of the deception which has been practised upon her would probably tell against her complete recovery. For a short time matters go smoothly; but acting on a sudden impulse, the Prince gains an audience with his wife, who becomes greatly incensed against Denis Mallory, but otherwise bears the news with fortitude. Denis, after hearing of the enforced interview, betakes himself to the garden, and meets the Princess, who denounces him in very strong terms. Denis declares his undying love and tells her the circumstances under which he was prevailed upon to play the part of the Prince. Meanwhile Creighton enters a *café* and by chance seats himself at a table occupied by Herr von Steinbrücke, who lets his tongue flow freely and partially reveals the purport of his mission to Paris, which is to kidnap the Princess, with the object of detaining the Prince from returning to Novodnia. While Creighton is telling this important news to his colleagues, Miss Mannering arrives with the news that "they've got the Princess!" And this is how it all happened: Steinbrücke told the Princess that her husband had met with a serious accident, and begged her to come and see him without delay. Taken completely off her guard, she assented, and did not discover the trick until too late. The Prince and Denis immediately institute a diligent search for the Princess. At length a message arrives from Novodnia for Von Altdorf, from which he learns that the Princess is being kept in hiding in Paris.

CHAPTER XVIII.

T the foot of the Avenue de l'Opéra, Von Altdorf changed from the omnibus to a cab, and came directly to the studio in the Rue Boissonade, where he told us all that had occurred.

"I suppose I was foolish to speak to the man," he admitted; "and more foolish still to blackguard him; but it was a chance I couldn't resist. After all, angry though he is, he won't dare harm the Princess; and besides, if Denis tracks him home, we should be able to storm the place and carry her off to-night."

"God send Denis doesn't lose track of him!" said I.

"Never you fear for Denis!" cried Von Altdorf. "Denis won't lose him. You should have seen Denis's face when he caught sight of the man! Oh, no! Denis will track him right enough."

He stopped a moment to laugh.

"Eh! but you should have seen Steinbrücke when I was telling him my frank opinion of his virtues! He'd have given years of his life to brain me with his beer-mug. I'll confess that my object in speaking to him wasn't to pick a quarrel. I thought something might be gotten out of him, that he might be bought off for a sum, and the Princess rescued at once. That would have been worth while. Still, we shall get her

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away promptly. I feel sure of that. It all rests with Denis, and, by Heaven! it couldn't rest with a better man! Of course, Steinbrücke bolted for home the moment I was out of sight. He'd be expecting me to come back and follow him. That's why I took an omnibus instead of a cab. He could see me far down the avenue. He'll never be thinking of another man. Denis should be here in an hour or so if Steinbrücke went directly to his lodgings."

We sat, excitedly talking the matter over, speculating as to Denis's probable success, and as to how we were to go about a rescue, when there came a knock at the door—a slow, timid knock.

"That will never be he," said I. "He wouldn't knock. He'd come in at once." I went to the door and opened it, and a young Frenchwoman asked for Monsieur Denis. She pronounced the name after the French fashion, and for an instant I was puzzled, not recognising it at all.

"No," said I, "there's no one of that name here. This is Monsieur Mallory's studio."

"Mais si, si!" insisted the girl. "M. Mallory—M. Denis Mallory—St. Denis!"

And I remembered that Denis's friends of the Quarter called him "St. Denis."

I told her that Denis was away at the moment, but that we expected him soon; and she came in to wait, saying her business was important. She sat in a corner of the divan, eyeing us distrustfully and answering with a "Yes" or "No" to the civil questions we put.

She must once have been an unusually beautiful girl even for her class, where there are many beauties; but illness or dissipation had hollowed her eyes and cheeks and drawn lines in her face. She coughed from time to time, and in each of her thin cheeks was a spot of bright colour.

"Consumption!" observed old Mackenzie behind his hand. "Gallopin' consumption! Thousands of them have it. Poor body! she's near the end of her strength."

Then, presently, there was a quick rattle of wheels in the street outside, that ceased as quickly. I ran to the window and peered out.

"It's he!" said I. "It's he, and I'll swear he's been successful, for he's laughing! He chucked the concierge under the chin as he passed her loge. Here he comes—— Hurrah! he's won!"

And Denis burst into the room with a shout.

"I've got him!" he cried almost before he was through the door. "I've got him! He's right here in the Quarter, as I thought! Oh, such a tale as I've got to tell! Why—why, Colette, Colette! *You*, child? What in the world are you doing here?"

But the girl ran to him, calling him by name, "St. Denis! St. Denis!" in her French fashion, over and over again, and caught him about the shoulders, clinging to him, turning her white face up to his, laughing and sobbing together.

"Why, what is it, child? What is it?" said Denis, slipping an arm about her and looking down into her eyes with a puzzled frown.

"Listen, St. Denis!" cried the girl, holding him still by the shoulders and straining her face up towards his eagerly; "listen! I've found the man you seek—the man who stole the—the lady from you! I know where he lives. I've been there. It's in the Impasse du Maine. Ah, St. Denis! I've found him!"

"Why, bless you, mignonne, so have I!" cried Denis with a laugh. "I've just come from there. Ah! we'll have a settlement a bit later, my German and I—— But come, child, you're weak, you're trembling! pauvre petite, you're fagged out! Come over to the divan here and tell me all about it, all you know and how you came to know it."

He led the girl over to the divan and sat there with her, holding her hands in one of his and patting her shoulder gently, for she seemed very, very tired, quite worn out, and sobbed hysterically.

"Poor little tired-out girl!" he cried very low. "Poor little girl! Colette, you haven't been well; your cheeks are thin, mignonne, your eyes are hollow. You must rest, take a month à la campagne. We'll see about it, hein?"

But the girl drew a little away from him, shaking her head.

"Ah, never mind me," she said. "Listen, St. Denis. I must tell you about the man and —and about Madame. It was Fifi Dumond who told me that you were looking for the Allemand with the yellow hair and the eyeglass and the queer right eyelid—and about the vieux cocher with the mourning-band on his arm. I found the cocher, quite by accident, away over beyond the Arc near the Marché des Ternes. I'd been over to see a—a friend, and I came upon the cocher sitting asleep on his fiacre by the kerb. He was alone, not in a cab-rank——"

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"'Do you love her very, very dearly, St. Denis?' she asked in a whisper."

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"One for you, Teddy!" said Denis, looking up with a smile.

"I wakened him," continued the girl, "and asked him about the Allemand with a monocle who had driven to the Rue Denfert Rochereau and taken a lady away. I told him that the Allemand was a friend whom I wanted to find, and whose address I didn't know. He was suspicious, the cocher, and wouldn't tell me anything about it, though I begged and teased and offered him all the money I had. But I—I found a—way——"

"Colette, Colette!" cried Denis suddenly, and turned the girl's averted face with his hands till he could see her eyes. "What do you—mean—child? What do you mean?" His voice was sharp with pain and horror.

But she hid her face from him and would not look up.

"What does it matter," she murmured, "to—such as—I am? Ah! I was doing it for you, St. Denis. I'd have spared nothing, nothing! No, wait; listen! So the cocher took me finally to the Impasse du Maine, where he'd taken the Allemand and Madame. Number 18 it is, 18bis, at the inner end of the impasse. I knew the concierge, old Mme. Lambert, and talked with her, asked her what painters were in the house now, for I'd posed there a long time before. And Mme. Lambert told me there were four étrangers lately come to take the suite au premier at the right of the courtyard. She thought they were Prussian pigs, and that the sister of one of them was there also, une grande dame, très belle. She said that the pig with the eyéglass had asked her to look up a maid for Madame, and that she had sent word to Diane St. Pierre; but that if I wanted the place, she would recommend me to Monsieur for half my first week's wages——"

"Good, good!" cried Denis. "Did you take it, child? did you take it?"

The girl nodded wearily.

"Yes, St. Denis. Yes, I took the place. I've been there caring for Madame for three days."

"But," said Denis, with puzzled brows, "but I don't understand—I don't quite see! Why didn't you get word to us before, Colette?—three whole days!"

The girl turned away from him and hid her face in her hands.

"I can't tell you, St. Denis," she said very low. "I can't tell you—ah! isn't it enough that I come to you now? Isn't it enough that I'm giving her—giving her back to you now?"

Denis sat for a long time staring at the bowed head and drooping shoulders.

He raised his face and motioned to me with his eyes. The Prince, Von Altdorf, and MacKenzie and I rose quietly and went out of the studio into the sleeping-room beyond, and dropped the portière behind us.

Then, after a time, the girl turned once more and put up her hands upon Denis's breast.

"Do you—do you love her very, very dearly, St. Denis?" she asked in a whisper. The great eyes burnt into his.

"Better than my life, child," said he gently; "but she's not for me. She is another man's wife, and will go to him if we rescue her. She's a princess, Colette."

The girl's face dropped upon his breast, and she shivered a little.

"Yet you'd bring her back, St. Denis? You'd bring her back for the other man? You'd risk your life to do it? You'd be so noble as that? Ah, St. Denis, I didn't know! I thought it was for yourself, and I—I couldn't bear the thought of it. I was strong enough to go so far—to do what—what I did; but when I saw her, St. Denis, beautiful and pure as an angel, glorious as—as nothing else I ever saw in the world, I couldn't bear the thought of her coming to you—even though I'd lost you long since. St. Denis, she tried to send messages by me to—to M. le Docteur Mac—Mac something, and to M. le Colonel von Altdorf; but I wouldn't take them. I told her that I dared not—all because I was so madly jealous—St. Denis! St. Denis, will you ever forgive me?"

"Forgive you, child?" cried Denis. "Forgive you, after what you—you did? after the sacrifice you made all for my sake? Ah, Colette, Colette! shall I ever forgive myself?" His voice choked, and he bent over the dark head and raised the face and kissed it.

"I shall never forget, mignonne," said he, "never till I die, for it was the most utter sacrifice I have ever known. No one ever did so much for a man. Oh, child, child, to have sold yourself for me!"

But the girl crept closer to him and lifted her face with a little sobbing laugh.

"Ah, don't feel so over it!" she begged. "It was nothing, just nothing! Why, see, I'm laughing, St. Denis. Shall not a girl love a man? And shall she not make any sacrifice for him, to gain him what he wishes? Think what you did for me—long ago! Think how you took me in from the

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street, ill, half-starved, desperate! I'd no claim upon you, St. Denis, but you pitied me—loved me a little, I like to think—let me think so, St. Denis! Leave me my dreams! And I, how did I treat you? Ran away for a petty spite, shamed you, played you false; but it was all because I loved you—and because I was a woman. Hadn't I a debt to pay, mon cœur? Tell me I've paid it, St. Denis! Tell me you forgive me! I don't ask for love or tenderness—we're past that; but tell me that I've paid the debt and that you forgive me! Ah, now I must go. You've made me happy again as I thought never to be happy—— You will rescue Madame, will you not, St. Denis? La pauvre Madame! She sits like a queen in prison, waiting, always waiting—— No, they do her no harm. They are polite always. She has her own little room, where I care for her, and she is well; but she cannot bear it long. Tell me what I can do to help you."

Denis crossed the room to a little cabinet upon the wall, and came back with a tiny pistol, an American revolver, chased and enamelled. It looked a mere toy, but such toys can be deadly playthings.

"Listen, Colette," said he. "Give this to Madame and tell her to hide it about her somewhere. Tell her that to-night we will come to her rescue—to-night at about two o'clock. Tell her to be dressed and waiting in her little room, waiting with the pistol in her hand, but that she must not fire it save in direst need. She must use it in defence only. When we break in the doors, one of the four men who hold the Princess captive will rush to her room and try, either to take her away while the others hold us back, or else to do her harm. She must keep him off with the pistol. He will not be difficult, I think, for he won't dare risk the sound of a shot. That is all. We will see to the rest. She must be ready for us. As for you, chèrie, when you have given the pistol to Madame and perhaps prepared her for the night, you must go away at once. You cannot help us, and to stay would be dangerous for you. Make some excuse—a sister ill, an illness yourself, anything to get away. Now go with the pistol, Colette; go quickly. Paid your debt? Oh, child, child, you've paid the greatest price of all! I shall never forget."

At the sound of a closing door we came out of the sleeping-room to find Denis upon the divan with his head in his hands. There were tears on his cheeks when he rose.

"Ah, gentlemen, gentlemen!" he cried, "yonder goes a woman who has given herself up to shame unspeakable to bring the man she loved to the woman whom she believed he loved. Is there any sacrifice greater than that? She has shamed me for ever!"

He went to the window and stared out into the gathering dusk, his hands clenched behind him.

Then after a time he turned to us again, with a little shake of the head and shoulders, as if he would rid himself of the gloom that covered him.

"And now for my tale!" he cried, and his eyes sparkled. "By my faith, it's worth telling! Look you, Von Altdorf, while you went off down the Avenue de l'Opéra, grinning from the top of your omnibus, your Austrian friend was on his feet beside his little table, staring after you like a man hypnotised. He couldn't seem to make out your game at all. He was fairly puzzled. I saw him shake his head once or twice and mutter to himself, then all at once he clinked a franc on the table and, grabbing up his stick, made off up the Rue Auber on foot, I close after him, of course. Once he stopped at the kerb and made as if he'd signal a cab, but he shook his head and went on again. He halted over on the place in front of the Printemps, and stood behind the little newspaper kiosk, as if he couldn't quite make up his mind what to do. Then, quite suddenly, he dashed out into the street and jumped upon the platform of a Gare Montparnasse omnibus that was passing. I followed in a cab, keeping close, so that he shouldn't escape me—he rode inside.

"He went the whole distance to the Gare Montparnasse, and when the 'bus stopped, swung off and slipped up the little Rue de l'Arrivée to the Avenue du Maine, I ambling along, still in my fiacre. He bolted into the Impasse du Maine like a coursed hare, while I stood on the opposite side of the avenue staring into a charbonnier's window at a thrilling display of coals and kindling-chips. I saw him go in the whole length of the impasse, and disappear under the inner end; number 18bis, it is, and by the saints, I could have howled aloud for sheer joy! Man, I know every inch of 18bis, Impasse du Maine. I know it light or dark, drunk or sober, but chiefly drunk. A very good pal of mine used to live there, and many's the night I bunked on his divan when I—well, when trying to get home would have been—indiscreet—'in a manner o' speakin',' MacKenzie.

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"I loafed about for five minutes and then went into the impasse to number 18bis, and knocked at the concierge's loge. I trembled in my boots, by the same token, for it was six to half-a-dozen that the old lady would remember me. If she did, I knew 'twould come to a case of bribery and corruption; but thank God she's blind as a bat in daytime, and had never, to her knowledge, set eyes on me before.

"I called up an atrocious bad accent—'twould have brought the tears to your eyes with laughing—mixed in a great deal of English, waved my arms and talked very loud—to make her understand the better—in fact, played the lately arrived nouveau as best I could, and demanded if she'd any vacant studios. I told her that my friend Cheltenham had said, in London, that he had lived there and liked the place. Cheltenham, the Honourable Dicky, was the pal who really had lived there. She nearly wept at Cheltenham's name—the good old soul had worshipped Dicky. She said that his suite was occupied at the moment by some pigs of Prussians, four messieurs and one grande dame.—'Aha!' said I to myself, 'is it, though? We're growing warm!'—but if I would like to see the rooms, she'd take me up. The Prussians, she thought, weren't to be there long.

"So we went up, after she'd whistled out Cheltenham's old cat Giovanni and showed him to me. Jove! that was an embarrassing minute, for Giovanni knew me at once and treated me like a brother.

"And now, before I go on, let me show you with a bit of paper just how the court and the rooms are arranged. You'll have to know your way about, later. As I've said, the place is at the inner end of the impasse. The impasse runs right into it. There's a square, stone-paved court that you enter through an archway. The loge of the concierge is under this arch at the right. Now, the house rises on all three sides of the court—the arch fills the fourth side. At the right, on the ground floor, there's a sort of machine-atelier, a shop of metal-workers, closed, of course, at night. To reach the suite where Cheltenham used to live, and where the Princess is being held now, you go in back of this shop under another arch, a small one, and up one winding stair. But the rooms don't open over the court; they open over a little, unpaved alley on the other side. The space directly over the machine-shop is filled by an architect's studio, untenanted. On the little alley there's nothing but a row of shedlike sculptors' studios, one storey high. No one has ever occupied them since I can remember. Now, the suite itself consists of a fair-sized studio, square, with a big sidelight, and a very narrow little passage running from it out to the door of the suite, upon which open a sleeping-room and a kitchen, with a tiled cooking-stove built into the wall. But since I knew the place, another room has been added, beyond the studio. This room used to be another studio, separated from the first by only a partition of boards, one thickness. You could hear perfectly anything that was said in the other room. It is in this last room, recently added to the suite, that the Princess is quartered.

"Now, are you quite sure that you see how the place lies? You'll observe there's nothing next it or under it that is tenanted. It's quite isolated. No noise less than a pistol-shot could reach any neighbouring ears, and that's a point for us, I would have you know. Mind you, once more, as you go in the outer door you've a long, narrow passage before you, the kitchen and bedroom opening in turn at its left, and the big studio right ahead. Then that's clear!

"Well, we went up, the old concierge and I, and pounded at the door. Someone inside gave a surly growl and a German curse—a most impolite curse, I protest—and finally opened the door an inch to see what was wanted. He wasn't going to let us in at all. Very short about it, he was. But the concierge gave him a bit of her tongue, told him that I was an Anglais, a friend of her old tenant, who wanted to take the suite, and that she was coming in, whether he liked it or not.

"So finally we got in, and I roamed about the place with my mouth open, doing a great deal more of my loud talking in mixed English and dreadful French—regular British tourist sort of thing—asking about the light and the ventilation and the price and such rot, and incidentally taking in all I could of the defensive preparations that the rogues had made.

"Our friend Steinbrücke was there, glowering in a corner and chewing at his nails like a villain in a play. Man, he was in an awful state of mind! though that's not surprising. There were two other men in sight, one of them the chap who had let us in—a German apparently—and the other, I should fancy, a Novodnian.

"I caught sight of the small door in the wall that opens upon the new room, and

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"'Mademoiselle!' said Colonel von Altdorf from the doorway."

asked what that led into, but Von Steinbrücke was on his feet in an instant, with his back against it, and said an invalid was inside. He tried to be natural and polite about it, but it strained him, poor chap. He'd had a bad afternoon.

"The concierge spoke up and told me that Monsieur's sister was inside, and that we mustn't disturb her, that the room was merely another sleeping-room.

"Just then I heard a man's voice from behind the door, in a husky sort of whisper, and then—and then—*hers*, by Heaven! answering him! It sounded a little weak, and very weary, but not ill, not ill, man, strong and calm as ever! Faith, I had to grip my hands to stand where I was and look uninterested!

"Then I set about to let her know I was there. I stood near the partition-wall talk-

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ing in a loud voice to the concierge, and whistled as I walked about the room a certain little air that — that the Princess would recognise, a song of Richard Lovelace's. She knew, then, she knew, for I heard a sudden, little, amazed, glad cry that she smothered almost before it was out of her mouth.

"Steinbrücke gave me a suspicious look, but I stared in his face and asked him, still in bad French, how he liked the rooms and if he could recommend them to me.

"Then, after a time, I came away; but I said to the concierge before we'd left the room that I'd be back again—loudly, so that the Princess could hear.

"'Je reviendrai, madame,' said I. 'Je reviendrai,' and I think *she* understood.

"That's all! I came straight away here to tell you. To-night we must make our dash. I've sent a pistol to the Princess by Colette, so that she'll know we are coming, and will be able to defend herself if they block us in the passage and try to do any harm to her."

Colonel von Altdorf sprang from his chair, where he had been excitedly nodding his head and tugging at his grizzled moustache. He seized Denis's two hands and shook them up and down.

"Lad, lad!" he cried, "why haven't we played together before? Why must I have grown grey before I met you? By my faith in God! you're the coolest hand I've ever seen, and the cleverest head. We'll get her back now—thanks to you—— Oh, lad, I'm proud to know you!" And old MacKenzie beamed over Von Altdorf's shoulder, and I seized Denis from behind with a great hug of delight, while the Prince of Novodnia cheered in a husky voice from the divan.

CHAPTER XIX.

We dined all together at a little restaurant near by, and then came back to the studio and spent the long evening in making our plans for what was to be done in the small hours of that night. We settled the slightest details of the attack, allowed for every possible contingency, and held a most spirited dress rehearsal, in which Prince Karl enacted the part of the Princess Eleanor, and I that of Von Steinbrücke—somewhat to the detriment of my breath and personal appearance, for Denis made an uncomfortably pressing leader of the charge.

Then when we had done laughing over this, Denis and Von Altdorf gave us an exhibition with the foils—just to get their hands in, as Denis put it—till Von Altdorf, hopelessly outclassed, threw down his sword, declaring that Denis was the devil, and no man at all, which was more or less true when Denis had a yard of steel in his hand.

And Denis, intent still upon "getting his hand in," strung an apple to the overhead lamp and cut thin slices from it with a German Schläger filched from its decorative position on the wall, shaved it with a blade so swift as to seem a wheel of light till nothing but the core was left, and Von Altdorf, who rather fancied himself at the sabres, sighed and shook his head in despair.

Thus we whiled away the dragging time, and strove to cover with laughter and games the tense keenness of anxiety that was in all our hearts, the grimness of resolution, and the sense of deadly peril that was nerving us to our task.

Old MacKenzie clicked his watch and gave a smothered growl of impatience.

"A quarter to twelve," said he. "Heavens! must we wait for ever? Who's for a hand at piquet? We've nearly two hours yet."

The Prince, Denis, and I sprang up readily enough, for idle waiting at such times strains the nerves as nothing else; but Von Altdorf stood in the middle of the room with his hands in his pockets and a somewhat guilty expression of countenance.

"Why, I was thinking," said he, in a careless tone, "of—of just stepping over to the house, to—er—see that they're all ready for our return. I shall be back directly, of course."

There was a subdued chuckle from MacKenzie which, I take shame in remembering, I echoed. Colonel von Altdorf went red as fire.

"Oh, they're quite ready, man," said MacKenzie brutally. "I've seen to all that."

"Still, you know," insisted Von Altdorf, "they may have forgotten something. It's best to be sure. I really think I'd better go." And Denis hacked at our shins under the table and said: "I wish you would go, old chap. One of us ought to. Go by the garden—it's shorter."

Von Altdorf made for the little rear window.

"I shan't be long," said he, as he let himself out.

He went up through the cool, scented gloom of the garden, up under the acacias,

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and through the old refectory porch into the house.

There was a dim light in the music-room, and someone was playing very softly, with pauses of silence, upon the piano. Then presently the music ceased, and there came to his ears the sound of low weeping.

"Mademoiselle!" said Colonel von Altdorf from the doorway. But the girl sitting before the piano did not raise her head from her arms. He went diffidently into the room, with his heart playing strange tricks, thumping most curiously. Women in smiles, ready with quick speech and feminine ways, were a sad puzzle to Von Altdorf. They lay beyond his world, undiscovered lands. But a woman in tears lay further still, beyond wider seas, filled him with an odd, inarticulate distress, a longing to help and comfort, to caress and defend, a new longing. Aye, but filled him with a certain terror, too.

He stood over the bowed figure and touched her shoulder awkwardly, timidly.

"Don't, mademoiselle!" said he. "Don't, I—I beg. You—unman me! Don't weep, madomoiselle. We'll bring the Princess back to you. You need have no fear—we'll bring her back."

"I do not—weep for the Princess," said Miss Jessica Mannering between her sobs.

"Why, then, mademoiselle?" asked Colonel von Altdorf very low.

"I weep," said she between her fingers, "for a—for brave gentlemen who—go into peril of their lives."

"Your tears," said he unsteadily, "your tears should nerve their hearts and strengthen their arms. I'll—I'll tell them," added Von Altdorf felicitously.

The girl sprang suddenly to her feet and blazed at him. Her aspect was really quite intimidating, despite an occasional sniff and a furtive dab with a very moist handkerchief. Colonel von Altdorf shrank back a step.

"You tell them if you—if you dare!" she cried. "I'll never speak to you again! Never!"

Colonel von Altdorf sighed and shook his head.

"Alas, mademoiselle!" said he, "I fear I know little of women. They do such surprising things!" he complained. "They're so unexpected! I—I thought you would not mind my telling the others that you wept for them. Your tears, mademoiselle, are pearls that each of us would wear into danger for a talisman."

The girl looked into Colonel von Altdorf's eyes.

"You say the truth, sir," she cried softly, "when you tell me that you know little of women—ah, so very, very little! But I would not have you know more, not now. I like your knowing little of them. You are more the man for it. Oh, I did not weep for the danger of the other gentlemen, gallant though they be! No—no!" when he would have moved towards her, with a little cry—"no! we must not stand here talking of—of ourselves—of happiness and—and such, while the Princess Eleanor is in the hands of villains. That were to be selfish and more than heartless. You must rescue her first, and then——" She caught her breath with a little sob.

"Oh!" cried Miss Mannering, "it fills me with trembling, Colonel, my Colonel, to let you risk your life as—as you must do."

She came to him and put her hands upon his arm, looking up into his face.

"You'll be careful?" she begged. "You'll be no more rash than you need? You'll come back to me unhurt, safe? Ah! but I mustn't speak to you so! I wouldn't make your eye falter or your arm weaken. I mustn't speak to you so, my soldier!"

She would have moved away from him, but Colonel von Altdorf took the small hands that had been upon his arm—making it tremble foolishly—and raised them to his lips.

"Your soldier, mademoiselle?" said he in a strange voice, "*your* soldier? Oh, yes, yes, I'll come back to you! Do you think anything can harm me now? *Your* soldier, mademoiselle? Ah, *your* soldier!"

She turned away from him at last and sat down before the piano. She was weeping again softly, but not tears of grief.

"I must go, mademoiselle," said Colonel von Altdorf. "The time is near for starting. Will you, before I go, sing to me again? Will you sing your old song: 'Love in my Bosom, like a Bee'? One likes to go into action with music."

She touched the keys, faltering a little, and presently sang, her voice very low and none too steady. And Colonel von Altdorf stood beside her with bowed head.

Then, when she had finished, he took a long, deep breath and pulled himself together with a jerk. He was the soldier again.

"And so, good-night, mademoiselle," said he, smiling. "The Princess shall be with you in an hour, or at the most, two, and I—I shall see you again, to-morrow. Good

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night!" And he turned quickly and left her, as if he dared stay no longer. Whereupon Miss Mannering, being one of those strange creatures, women, of whom Von Altdorf confessed to knowing little, fell to weeping again, and then to smiling, and held her two hands to her cheek as if they were suddenly grown dear to her, and again wept.

But Colonel von Altdorf went down through the garden and, climbing in by the little window, presented himself once more in the studio with a carriage so jaunty and a face so illumined that old MacKenzie chuckled again. But Denis caught his breath sharply and went over to the opposite side of the room, where he stood some time with his back to us, making a choice of the swords that hung there.

I think it was not till this moment, not till he saw Von Altdorf's transformed face, that he realised what the night's work meant to himself—that rescuing the Princess but brought her back to another man; that she was lost to him utterly and for ever; that once she was safe again, he might not have even the satisfaction of working and fighting for her. I think that the past week of desperate planning and working had quite driven his own plight from his mind, had directed his whole energy to the one fierce struggle to rescue the woman he loved, and that it was not till now the thought came to him: "What of to-morrow?"

Still, if the thought came to him in that moment with crushing force, he threw it from him with a force as great. The work was yet to be done. He turned about once more quickly.

"Make ready, gentlemen," said he. "You have your pistols, but remember they're for show only, no firing. It's steel to-night. We must have no more noise than is necessary. Take a sword, each of you, a light one. Here's my toy!"

He held up a thin, glistening blade, a wonderful masterpiece from Spain. One might bend it till point touched hilt; slender as a foil and no heavier, weighted indeed like a foil at the hilt, properly to balance its length.

"We can carry the things under our coats," said he. "Thank Heaven, it's a rainy night! If I were you, I should take sharpened foils rather than anything heavier. They'll meet us with sabres, I think, for they'd a lot of sabres about the room to-day. They won't dare shoot. You see the beauty of the foils is that a man with a foil has a tremendous advantage over a sabre. He's infinitely quicker. Yes, take foils by all means. Have you the dark-lantern, Von Altdorf? Ready, Ted? Into your rain-coats and come along, then!"

But three of us were to go—Von Altdorf, Denis, and I. The Prince, though he at first insisted and afterward begged piteously, we would not take, for his life must not be risked. Sir Gavin was no swordsman, and was, moreover, beyond the age for fighting.

In any event, we considered that we three should be a match, in a surprise, for the four we were to attack. And the quarters, it must be remembered, were cramped.

We wrung the Prince's and old MacKenzie's hands. A sudden gravity came upon us all at the last, for we knew that we might not meet again. Then the three of us went quickly out into the wet night.

We turned presently from the Boulevard Raspail into the Boulevard Edgar Quinet, and walked down its length under the dripping trees, down past the high wall of the cemetery and so under the railway bridge to the Avenue du Maine, and halted before the mouth of the impasse. It lay black and wet and wholly deserted. Indeed, there was no living thing in sight anywhere save that across the street and down a little way at the foot of the avenue stood a cab-rank. The lamps threw a row of dispiriting yellow gleams across the shining pavement.

"I suppose," said Denis, "we'd best bring a carriage to the head of the impasse here, and have it wait. It wouldn't do to take it clear in?"

"I say take it right away to the door," said I. "It will sound as if we were ordinary lodgers coming home for the night. Have the thing turn about, ready to make a dash the moment we're out with the Princess. If we're pursued, we stand a better chance of getting well away."

"Right O!" cried Denis. "Ted, you've at times a surprising head! Come along, then; we'll all get into the carriage and ride up to the door."

So we went down the street to the miserable-looking line of vehicles and roused a cocher who was sleeping peacefully inside his galérie.

"À l'Impasse du Main!" we cried. "Tout au fond, and wait there till we come out!"

I don't mind confessing now, when it is all over and long past, that my heart jumped a bit and my breathing quickened as we went rattling noisily into that long, narrow, echoing cul-de-sac, pistols in our pockets, swords hidden under our long rain-coats,

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"His high, white forehead shone wet in the cross-light of the lamps."

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and a dark-lantern bulging from the vicinity of Colonel von Altdorf's manly bosom. It seemed, there in the chill, dripping rain, such an absurd thing to be doing in peaceful Paris at this end of the nineteenth century! I could not rid myself of the notion that it was all a huge joke—a masquerade over which we would have a great laugh presently. The planning of a desperate coup, seated at ease amongst lights and warmth and comfort, with friends about one, keen minds to offer suggestions, cool heads to weigh risks, is such a different thing to carrying out that coup, silently, grimly, in the dead of a cheerless night, with Death grinning at one's face through the rain.

The cab halted at the extreme end of the impasse, and we got out, gave our low-voiced direction to the cocher—to turn about and wait—and rang the bell.

Now, the law in Paris is so constructed that every house, rich or poor, whether in the Champs Élysées or the slums of St. Antoine, shall be under the charge of a concierge, who shall close the same tightly at night, and admit the residents thereof only upon the ringing of a bell. Furthermore, each lodger, upon coming in, must, if the hour be early, be recognised by the concierge; or if it be late, and the concierge in her bed, so that at the summons she releases the lock of the door with the "cordon" that hangs to her hand, the lodger must call out his name as he enters and closes the door. The concierge system, it will be understood, is nothing more than a great arm of the police, an espionage, hour by hour, and day by day, of every resident in Paris.

We rang twice before the concierge waked and pulled her cordon. Then the lock clicked, and the little door set in the great heavy gate, that by night closed the archway, swung open.

"Steinbrücke, madame!" sang out Denis in a bass guttural as we closed the door; "'soir, madame!" and we tiptoed softly over the rough stones of the courtyard and under the little arch that leads to the stair at the right.

"Off with your coats now!" whispered Denis. "Swords ready?—pistols?—lantern lighted, Von Altdorf? Here, wait an instant!"

Now, the little arch, under which we stood, gave not only upon the stair, but beyond upon the tiny alley alongside the old sculptors' sheds and under the windows of Steinbrücke's studio. It was a blind alley, closed by walls at both ends. Denis stole out into it and peered upward.

"Dim lights in all the rooms," said he when he returned; "all but the kitchen. They're taking no risks. Now, then, up the stairs!"

We left our rain-coats in a heap under the arch and mounted slowly, with infinite caution. But near the top, when there was but a step or two to gain, Von Altdorf stumbled in the dark, and the closed lantern clashed against the stair-rail.

We were at the door in an instant; but there came from inside a quick movement, the sound of hurrying steps, and a voice, as that of one on watch waking others.

"Now, then!" whispered Denis, "the door! Are you ready? One, two—go!" He had placed himself, as we had arranged, a couple of paces from the door, back towards it; Von Altdorf, sword hanging from wrist, had braced his hands against Denis's shoulders, I mine against Von Altdorf's waist, and with a little run we shot through the flimsy door as though it had been cardboard.

Denis whirled as he fell forward, so that he went upon one knee, sword ready in his right hand, and the glare from Von Altdorf's lantern streamed over his head and along the narrow little passage till it met the white faces and staring eyes of the pair of ruffians who bore down, half dressed but wide awake, to check us.

They had sabres, as Denis had predicted, and the blade of the foremost flashed over his head as he charged. But when it fell, it rattled harmlessly upon the floor, and its owner lurched face downwards after it. Denis's thrust had been too quick for eye to follow.

Then the second man did a curious thing. Blocked so that he could not strike, by the fellow in front of him, and now borne back by Denis's lightning point, he made no attempt at sword-play, but dropped his sabre suddenly and threw himself forward headlong, seeking to catch Denis's legs about the ankles and so bring him to the ground.

A man less quick would instantly have been floored, but Denis hurdled him as a football-player will sometimes hurdle the opposing line or the man who tackles too low, and was at the studio door in an instant.

"After me, one of you!" he called over his shoulder. I pushed by Von Altdorf, who had his point against the fallen man's neck,

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and we burst into the wide space of the studio together.

The room was dimly lighted from small lamps hung upon the wall and from a large one overhead, which was turned low. There was a litter of clothes and blankets and pillows about the floor, and the air was full of tobacco-smoke.

Baron von Steinbrücke stood in the middle of the room alone. He must have been sleeping, for he was clad only in drawers and undershirt. He stood with his back towards the door of the further room—the door was slightly ajar—and he held in his hand no sabre like the others, but a long, slender blade such as our own. He stood leaning forward a little, poised, waiting. There was a slight smile upon his lips, but this passed in an instant, and I shall never forget his look when he saw our two faces full in the lamps' light, and recognised us—Denis, who had stalked about the room under his very nose that afternoon, asking questions in bad French; and myself, to whom he had, in his cups, babbled secrets that would hound him to his grave did I but make them known.

His sword-point shook and drooped for a breath, then he was at us with a snarl of rage. I have never seen a more furious or more reckless whirlwind of attack.

"Give him to me, lad! Give him to me!" said Denis, and I stood back while they engaged. I knew there could be but one outcome to that combat.

But their blades had no more than clashed when there came the sound of a scuffle from the room beyond. Alas, we had forgotten the fourth man! And then the Princess Eleanor's voice.

"Quick, Denis!" she cried, "be quick!" There was no fear in the tone, no trembling, but it told a desperate need.

"Quick! be quick!" she called again. "He's trying to—— Shall I shoot? Shall I shoot?"

Denis whirled swiftly towards the door. I saw him lunge again and again quick as light, but the Austrian's desperate fury made a defence that even his matchless skill could not break down at once. The man would have to be tired out by rapid attack, but there was no time for that.

Denis's back was at the door now.

"Now, then, Ted!" he cried, "take him on now!" and my point reached Steinbrücke's left arm just as Denis went through into the inner room.

What happened there, of course, I could not see. It was told me afterwards. Denis, it seems, was but in the nick of time, for the fourth ruffian, holding a great pillow in his left hand as a shield, was sorely pressing the Princess Eleanor with his sword, while she had him covered with her pistol. Why he hesitated to finish his work, I do not know. I suppose he was in deadly fear of the pistol and equally in fear of his master, who had commanded him to kill the Princess, so that he hung between the two terrors, hoping that our attack might be repulsed.

It is possible, on the other hand, that he was not to kill her till Steinbrücke, seeing the battle hopelessly against him, should call the word. I cannot tell. I know only that at Denis's entrance he whisked about to face him, and an instant later dropped to the floor with a clean thrust through his right shoulder.

Meanwhile I was as busy as any man may be, with the Austrian. Now, I am no Denis Mallory, though I take some small pride in my swordsmanship, and I confess freely that had I been the first to engage Baron von Steinbrücke, I should, without doubt, have been overcome; but Denis had taken the first fire and fury out of him. That wonderful storm of attack had tired him a little, so that by now he was breathing a bit hard, and we were evenly matched. Then, too, I had wounded him slightly in the left arm before his attention was wholly diverted to me from Mallory. The pain of this may have affected him. Without doubt his anxiety as to what was going on in the further room lessened his keenness. So we fought evenly, doggedly—he with a bitter desperation, I determined that he should not leave my point till the Princess was safe.

I remember that I heard muffled cries and oaths behind me, from the passage, a little crash and the scuffle of feet. I remember wondering dully what Von Altdorf could be doing out there, and wondering still more, when, from the corner of my eye, I saw him pressing one of the men whom I had supposed done for, before his point into the light of the big room, and there engaging him. But I had no time for anything but my own fight. Indeed, at one moment it seemed to me that I myself was done for. What had happened out in the passage was something like this.

The first rascal, whom Denis had spitted before he could bring down his heavy sabre, was not dead, but merely run through the shoulder. Indeed, to kill any of the men was far from our intention. A dead man meant subsequently the police, and an

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investigation that might prove awkward for us. We wished merely to disable them, so that we could make good our retreat with the Princess Eleanor.

But the fellow, when he had lurched to the floor, lay there so silent and so still that Von Altdorf supposed him unconscious—as, indeed, he may have been for a moment or two—and so stood directly over his huddled body while pressing the point of his blade against the back of the unhurt rascal who had tried football-playing with Denis.

But a dead cut-throat is the only safe one, as Colonel von Altdorf will heartily bear witness, for even as he stood wondering if he had not best stab the rogue before him and have done with him, there came a sudden movement from beneath, and his feet were all at once jerked from under him, so that, cumbered as he was, with sword in one hand and lantern in the other, he fell sprawling and cursing upon the prostrate rascal whose fate he had been meditating.

He told us afterwards, disgustedly enough, amidst our heartless roars of laughter, that for quite a minute the three of them panted and squirmed and struggled in a ludicrous heap there in the dark, narrow little passage. He had one small advantage, which I doubt not he pressed. The two others knew not, in the gloom, whether they were striking friend or foe, and so were chary of their blows. Von Altdorf, on the other hand—so he says—struck most heartily at anything that came to his hand.

Presently, however, the unhurt one of the two slipped away from under Von Altdorf, and groping upon the floor, found his sabre, with which he dealt at random a frightful slash, and at once the arms that clung desperately to Von Altdorf's ankles dropped limp and helpless, and he, springing up, drove the other before him into the light of the studio.

By this time, Baron von Steinbrücke's breath was coming very fast and hard, and his high, white forehead shone wet in the cross-light of the lamps. He was no longer young, and he had not lived the sort of life that preserves a swordsman's vigour and endurance. I myself was fresh and strong—just beginning, indeed, to warm to my work; and I knew that, saving accidents, I had him in my power. In a little while now he must be so fatigued that I could do with him as I liked.

Then Denis entered again from the further room. He held his sword en garde, not knowing what he might meet, but his left arm encircled the Princess Eleanor's waist, holding her a little behind him. She, poor lady, now that danger was past, swayed upon her feet and trembled, near the edge of collapse. The long night of waiting, pistol in hand, of listening for our attack, and then her moment of deadly peril from the fourth ruffian's sword, must all have been a frightful strain to her already overwrought nerves.

Baron von Steinbrücke, when he saw Denis with the Princess upon his arm, made a furious attempt to break away from me and attack him, but I pressed him back, quickening my play, and touched him again lightly near his first wound. That brought back his defence, though it wrung from him a snarling curse that was a foolish waste of sadly needed breath.

"Off with you, Denis!" I cried. "Don't wait for us! Take her to the carriage at once and drive like the devil! We'll follow on foot. We're both safe. Off with you!"

"Off with you, lad!" came from the further corner, where Von Altdorf slashed merrily away—for the pure fun of it, I'm certain. He could have done for his man long since—— "Off with you! we're all right! Heavens! why don't you go?"

So Denis, with a lingering, unwilling glance over his shoulder—I knew he hungered for more fighting—bore the Princess away and left the two of us to our work.

Von Altdorf finished his almost at once. I heard his opponent's sabre crash to the floor, and the man himself drop slowly, first to his knees, and then, gasping hard, go flat upon his face and lie still. Then Von Altdorf went out into the passage to make sure of the wounded rascal who had pulled him down, but this man had fainted again and was harmless. So that Baron von Steinbrücke alone remained to be dealt with, and Von Steinbrücke's strength was going fast.

Von Altdorf, who stood near, watching, was just crying: "Oh, finish it, lad! finish it! This is no salle d'armes!" when the Austrian, in lunging wildly, caught his foot in one of the garments with which, as I have said, the floor of the place was littered, so that his impetus carrying his body forward, threw him upon his knee and his left hand, which he put out to save himself.

But my point, held ready to parry his thrust, had lain at his breast, inclined slightly upwards, so that as he fell, it entered into his throat somewhere above the larynx, in the soft parts under the chin, and driving inward, must have pierced his tongue and so met the bony roof of the month, where,

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having only the force given it by his falling body, it halted.

I jerked quickly back and withdrew the blade, but Baron von Steinbrücke lurched forward upon his face, and rolling partly over, lay still and inert.

"By the saints!" cried Von Altdorf in a hoarse whisper, "you've done for him, lad! or he's done for himself! There's an end of Von Steinbrücke! He's dead as a dog! Ah, well, it can't be helped. Now what's to do? We can't leave all these swine lying about untended. They'll all die."

"Bring one of 'em to his senses," said I, "and let him care for the others. Who's the least hurt? Curse Von Steinbrücke, anyhow! The thing was no fault of mine. I meant to try him and then merely disable him a bit—— Ah, well, who's the least injured of them, I wonder?"

"Mine, I fancy," said Von Altdorf; "I barely scratched the fool in his sword-arm. Fright and fatigue did the rest. Fetch some water."

I brought a jug of water from the further room—the rogue whom Denis had pricked there was sitting up, by the way, though very shaky and white about the chops—and we dashed it liberally in the fellow's face till he gasped and shivered and opened his eyes, little the worse for his hurt, but much the worse for his fright.

Then, seeing that he was well able to care for his wounded friends, we slipped quickly out of the place, down the stairs, and through the little outer door which Denis had left ajar, and never paused till we were far up the Boulevard Edgar Quinet, under the cheerless walls of the cemetery.

Denis, meanwhile, had made all possible speed down through the court and out to the carriage, into which he half lifted the Princess, and told the cocher to drive to the Place du Lion de Belfort, for he would not risk driving straight home, in view of the possibility of further trouble. Then he sprang in himself and closed the door.

The galérie rocked and leaped and jolted over the uneven stone pavement, and the Princess, who had fallen back half fainting into a corner, was thrown roughly about on her seat. Denis slid an arm about her waist and drew her close to him.

"Try, madame," he said in her ear, "try to forget who I am. Try to think that I'm—Jessica, or—or anyone else but myself, for I must make you comfortable. I must save your strength till we are safe at home."

He drew her close into his arms till her head dropped weakly back upon his shoulder. Her brow touched his cheek, her hair was against his eyes, and she so rested upon him that, bracing his body against the plunges of the carriage, he brought her to the end as if she had lain upon a pillow.

At the Place du Lion they left the voiture, and waited while it drove off rumbling down the Boulevard Raspail, before they turned into the Rue Denfert Rochereau.

They had but a little way to go, but this little way Denis was forced almost to carry the Princess, who hung upon the verge of faintness. And he confessed to me long afterwards that he was as nearly fagged out as a man may be when they stood at last before the door of the old convent, and the door opened upon eager, waiting faces, warmth and safety, MacKenzie towering anxiously over the heads of the servants, the Prince half mad with fear and the long waiting.

But Denis, holding the Princess upon her feet by main strength, raised a white face towards them, calling: "Jessica! Jessica!" and Miss Mannering pushed through the group with a cry of joy and held out her arms to him.

Then the Princess roused herself for an instant and turned from Denis to her cousin. She took a little, faltering, uncertain step, as if with the very last of her strength.

"Jess, Jess!" she cried weakly. "Oh, Jess, Jess! I'm so tired! so——" and she fell forward with a sob into the outstretched arms and laid her head in the hollow of Miss Mannering's neck, and fainted quite away.

CHAPTER XX.

"Yes, it's a pity you had to kill him," said Denis, as we sat the next day talking over the night's work. "I mean, it's a pity the beast had to kill himself, for that seems to have been the way of it. It may stir up an awkward row with the police. A dead man's a serious matter in these times. I suppose there's no doubt that he was quite finished, eh?"

"Oh, the man was dead right enough," said I disgustedly. "Lord bless you! the blade went into his gullet a matter of four inches or so! I was just about to disable him neatly, too. Hard luck, I call it!"

"It's the end of a blackleg and scoundrel," broke in Von Altdorf. "There's a list of people in high places, lad, a list as long as your arm, who'll breathe a sigh of relief when they hear the news—if ever they do hear it."

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"Ah, well," said Denis, "the man's dead, and it's poor business abusing him now. Death wipes things out rather, doesn't it? One feels a bit low railing at a dead man for sins that he can't sin again. Still," he added regretfully, "since the rascal had to die, I'd like to have been the one to finish him. I should have felt a glow of conscious virtue so long as I lived. I should have felt that I'd done one good act—amongst a sad heap o' bad ones. Has anyone heard of the Princess since morning? Sir Gavin said then she was doing famously."

"She's fit as can be," said I. "What she went through seems to have harmed her little. She'll keep to her bed for a day or two, for prudence' sake, and then be about again."

Denis sighed, and his eyes took on their old look of pain and hopelessnes. He rose from his chair and went over to the window, where he stood tapping absently upon the glass and staring out over the garden.

MacKenzie and the Prince came in together, having walked around by way of the boulevard from the house. The Prince handed a despatch to Colonel von Altdorf.

"This just arrived," said he. "I suppose it's from Novodni, viâ Vienna."

Then he went over to the window to join Denis and overwhelm that young man anew with repetitions of his never-to-be-settled obligation to him. Indeed, the Prince's gratitude to Denis as the leader in the rescue of the Princess Eleanor was most affecting to see, and his demonstrative Southern volubility was a source of painful embarrassment to the young Irishman.

"Aye, it's from Novodni," said Von Altdorf, unfolding the sheets, "and a long one, too. I must tell Czerowitz that we're all right again and that he needn't—— What? Here, wait, wait!"

His face went suddenly very pale and he bent closer over the sheets that he was translating from the cipher. His manner drew us all to our feet in a circle about him, the Prince foremost. But when he had finished writing out in fair language the strange-looking jumble of words upon the despatch-sheets, he sat so long, staring wide-eyed before him, that the Prince touched him upon the shoulder anxiously, impatiently.

"Well, Colonel?" he demanded, "well, what is it? What's the matter?"

Then Colonel von Altdorf sprang up and faced his master, the written sheets crushed in his outstretched hand.

"It's the tottering of your throne under you, sir!" he cried bitterly, and his voice shook, though he strove to hold it firm. "It's what was bound to come, what I warned you would come! Sir, sir! if you had but stayed in Novodni! George has seized his chance, curse him! and Steinbrücke won, after all, despite our work last night, for he held you here in Paris, as he knew he could, by stealing the Princess, till George should be strong enough to make his move. Listen to this! It's from Czerowitz, telegraphed from Novodni to his man in Vienna, and thence to me here.

"'Georgias reported moving towards Novodni. Makarin already taken, used as base of supplies. Great excitement in Novodni. Ministry resigned this morning. Premier alone faithful to Prince Karl. Populace divided in sentiment, but Pavelovitch element grows in numbers. Prince loudly denounced for prolonged absence. Life Guards faithful, but Army uncertain. Rioting in streets. Marshal Sbolin shot at while driving from Palace.'

"There's the country that your father bequeathed you, sir, and this is what you have made it! Aye, you, sir! I've served you faithfully, Prince Karl, and I shall serve you till you or I die, but I'll tell you the truth, by Heaven! You have brought this upon Novodnia, and you'll answer for it at God's throne. Had you stayed where your duty lay, Georgias would be hiding in the mountains now, not marching towards Novodnia. Can nothing rouse you—nothing?" And Von Altdorf's voice broke so that he was forced to pause. He was terribly excited, and his hands shook as he stretched them appealingly towards the Prince.

"Listen, sir!" he cried after a moment. "There's just a chance—a desperate chance—that you may save your country if you leave at once for Novodni, and travel night and day till you are there. Your mere presence would be better than an army. I will telegraph at once that you're on your way, that the Prince is returning to punish presumptuous rebels and so save his land from war and loot. You must start to-night, sir. You can be there in three days. Meanwhile the news that you are coming may hold the situation as it is."

The Prince was very pale. He seemed dazed, bewildered, as if he had never dreamed of this possibility, as if the calamity had fallen upon him from a clear sky.

"But—but, Colonel," he faltered, "but, Colonel, the—Princess. I must—why, I

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"His own hands trembled a little under hers."

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must see her first. We haven't come as yet to any understanding! I must——"

"Aye, the Princess!" cried Colonel von Altdorf bitterly. "Always the Princess, and never the trust God has given you! Are you a prince, sir, or a lover of women? Tell me that! By my faith, I do not recognise your father in you! Duty, honour, faith, bravery! Those were his watchwords—God rest his noble soul! He thought first of all of his country and his people. He thought last and least—if at all—of himself. Many a night, sir, I've seen him go from his chamber to the Palace chapel and kneel there the night long, praying for guidance in some difficult matter of State. Aye, I've waited and watched outside the chapel doors while he prayed, guarding him from harm. No mobs rioted in the streets then, Prince Karl, no Russian boot-lickers marched upon Novodni with connivance of the very ministry and half the populace. The ruler of Novodnia sat on his throne, he made no love-quests to the other end of Europe! Ah, well, sir"—his voice was breaking again—"Ah, well, Novodnia's days of honour and independence are over. She'll be a Russian pasture soon, a stableyard for sale, very likely, to the highest bidder. Sir, I beg leave to tender my resignation from your service. I have a small possession called my honour which I hold indifferent dear." He turned away from us all, his white face drawn and working, and sat down once more at the table, dropping his head into his arms.

But Prince Karl went over to him at once and laid a hand upon his shoulder.

"Nay, nay, Colonel," said he in a low, gentle voice. "I won't accept your resignation." There was a certain pathetic dignity about the man, a certain humility which he wore with a sad pride.

"I will go to Novodni at once, old friend," he went on, stroking and patting the bowed shoulder as a woman might have done. "I will go to-night and make all possible speed. And when I am there—why, we'll punish presumptuous rebels, as you say, Colonel, and we'll save our land from war and loot, for I think it may still be done. I am not the man my father was—would God I were!—and you've spoken no more than the truth. I've been a poor ruler, Colonel, a weak prince—I was never born to rule; but what I can do, I will do. I shall save Novodnia or die fighting for her; more than that no man can promise. Come, old friend, your hand! Let there be no talk of resignation till Georgias is dead or back in his hills with a price upon his head, and the White Bear has turned north once more. And no man shall say of me again that Novodnia and her honour come second in my thoughts."

He turned to where old MacKenzie sat smoking and brooding in the corner.

"Will it be possible, Sir Gavin," he asked, "for me to see the Princess Eleanor for ten minutes before I leave this evening?"

"But, sir, sir! she's in her bed!" cried MacKenzie. "I've forbidden her to leave it before the week's end!"

"Still," insisted the Prince, "in a case of emergency like this, sir? It would do no actual harm? No! Then will you be so good as to request the Princess to grant me a short interview this afternoon? Come, it is nearly four o'clock, and there is much to do before leaving. We will go to the house now, through the garden. I shall return in half-an-hour, gentlemen."

He moved towards the little window that gave upon the garden, and old MacKenzie followed, shaking his head in unwillingness; but Denis Mallory stopped them.

"Just a—moment, sir," he begged. "May I speak to you?"

The Prince turned to him with a smile and laid his two hands upon Mallory's shoulders.

"Ah, good friend!" said he, "it cuts me deep to leave you here and to feel that I shan't see you again. You have given me so much, and I—why, I've given you nothing at all save work and pain. It cuts me deep to leave you!"

"Why, sir," cried Denis, with a little, embarrassed laugh, "why, sir, you've hit upon the very point: I don't want to be left."

"Yet I must go," said the Prince. "You would not have me stay?"

"No; ah, no, of course not!" cried Denis. "You must go, sir, there's no doubt of that; but I hardly know how to put it—you've been talking about how much you owe me, and—and all that rot, you know. Pay me out, sir. Take me with you to Novodnia! Let me fight for you down there."

I think everyone of us held his breath for sheer astonishment. I know I cried out: "Denis, Denis! You're mad! What are you thinking of?" But he would not turn his head.

"Take you with me, Mr. Mallory?" said the Prince in amazement, "take you with me? But—but your life here—your friends

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—your ties? Why, our quarrel, là-bas, is no quarrel of yours! Do you mean that you wish actually to take service in the Novodnian Army? Are you quite serious?"

"Quite, sir," declared Denis, smiling into the other's puzzled eyes. His own eyes softened for a moment. "Why—why, yes, sir, I've some friends to think of, have I not? Aye, three as good pals as ever a man boasted—— And there's a miracle, for friends haven't just flocked about me of late years. They've been scarce, awful scarce! Still, my friends wouldn't say me nay to going with you. Would you, Teddy lad? Would you, Von Altdorf? Would you, MacKenzie? No, they'd say I couldn't do better. Fighting's my trade, sir. I was bred to it, and I've done little else—and that little badly. I've served under five flags, and I'd like to serve under the Novodnian banner for the sixth. They'd tell you good of me, sir, should you ask where I might mention. They might speak ill of my living, but they'd tell you good tales of my fighting. Faith, I commanded an army in the field once! To be sure," he added, with that whimsical touch that never left him in a serious moment, "to be sure, it wasn't just a first-class army, and I blush to admit that it was roundly defeated; but it was an experience, for all that. Nay, sir, let me go with you, serve you, fight for you, help to seat you firm again on your throne. I've nothing to hold me here. Let me be about a useful business. I've served you and—and the—Princess here; let me serve you and—the Princess in the field."

"You go into the keenest danger, Mr. Mallory," warned the Prince, looking steadily upon him. "Our lives must be held cheap when once we've entered Novodnia."

Denis raised his sombre eyes and met those of Prince Karl.

"I have no love for my life, sir," he said quietly. And I think the Prince understood. He reached for Denis's hand and took it between his own and wrung it warmly.

"Then you shall go!" he cried. "And I thank Heaven for it! I wish I had more gentlemen in my service in whom I could place such faith and to whom I could entrust such difficulties. We leave at midnight, Mr. Mallory."

He was turning away when Von Altdorf spoke.

"And I, sir? I go, of course?" He spoke a bit anxiously, for I think he feared lest the Prince might leave him to guard the Princess Eleanor.

The Prince laid a hand upon his arm and gave a little laugh—a sad, little, wistful laugh.

"Alas, my mentor!" said he. "Must we come to odds again? I go to my post of duty, as you bid me—indeed, I needed not the bidding, once the need of me was made evident; but it was in my mind that you should stay. Ah, Colonel, I leave you to guard what is dearer to—what is next dearest to me after the welfare of my State and people. I leave the Princess in your care as I might leave her in the care of no other. Your trust is the highest of any—— Still, I do not command, Colonel, I do not insist. I beg. It is my dearest wish that you stay."

Colonel von Altdorf turned away with a little sigh.

"As you will, sir!" said he. "I had hoped for some fighting; but if I can serve you better here, I'll stay. So that you go yourself, and as speedily as possible, I have nothing more to ask."

MacKenzie had meanwhile gone on ahead, so that when the Prince came up through the garden and entered the house, a servant was waiting to say that if his Highness would be so good as to make himself comfortable in the music-room, Madame would be down soon.

He had not long to wait till his wife appeared. She had clad herself in a loose house-gown that hung about her in long, straight folds, and a little whim of women's coquetry had led her to fasten at her bosom two or three pink roses, fresh and fragrant and beautiful. She looked tired about the eyes, and she was paler than her wont, but she seemed not at all ill or weak. She gave the Prince her hand and sat down near him by a window.

"Sir Gavin has been telling me all about it—Karl," said she: "that the country is in the gravest danger, and that you must go there at once. I understand, quite. You mustn't be away from your post of duty, must you? Alas! you shouldn't have left it at all, Karl!"

The Prince threw out his hands with a little gesture of helplessness.

"There is something stronger than duty, Eleanor," said he. "No, I shouldn't have come away. It was wrong, selfish, criminal if you like, but—there's something stronger than duty. At least, there has been something. Duty must be first, now."

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"Ah, I know, I know!" cried the Princess softly. "You came for me, Karl. I shouldn't be the one to reproach you, should I? And I've brought you nothing but trouble and grief and danger. I should think you'd hate me, Karl, dread hearing my very name. I think I must be something of a witch—are there witches now? there used to be when I was little—I seem to carry calamity with me. But I'm not quite like the witches, after all, for the heaviest of the calamity I suffer myself. It would have been a very good thing, I think, if I could have died when I was so terribly ill. Think what everyone would have been saved."

"Oh, Eleanor, Eleanor!" cried Prince Karl, "you wring my heart! You must not talk so. You're tired still, my Queen—despondent. When you are quite strong and rested once more, you will be glad to live for the very joy of living. You are too beautiful to be unhappy."

The Princess gave a weary little smile.

"Is beauty, then, a source of happiness?" she asked. "I hadn't noticed—— Ah, Karl, all this is beside the question! The question is: What's to become of us? What are we to do? I've been thinking of it deeply. I used to sit and think of it—to keep myself from going mad, I fancy—while I was in the hands of those—those men. And I came to the conclusion that if ever I were rescued, if ever I got safely away, I'd do as you wish me to. I shall come to you when you want me. No; wait! Hear me out! You mustn't misunderstand me. You mustn't think that I've come to—love you, you know, or anything like that. I think"—she turned her head and looked out through the window to the trees that swayed in the warm breeze—"I think that all the love has gone out of me for ever. Perhaps I'm wrong. Perhaps it is only paralysed for a time, but I think it's quite dead. I seem not to be able to feel that—that sort of thing for anyone now—— Ah! it was a cruel, cruel trick they played upon me, wasn't it—well meant though it may have been?

"No, I don't love you, Karl, not in that way; but I've brought you so much trouble and grief that the least I can do is to give you the rest of my life, if you want it. I shall be a faithful wife to you, and—if it shall seem best, later, to raise me to sit beside you, I shall try to be a good princess and a kind one. I shall try to make your—*our* people love me. Is that enough, Karl? Do you want me on such terms? It isn't the way a wife should come to her husband, is it, offering him the remainder of a crippled life for which she has no love; finding in herself none of the thing that makes life beautiful, to offer him? But such as I am, such as I can bring to you, you may take me when you will. It mustn't be now, must it? We must wait till this danger is over, till the country is at peace again. It wouldn't be wise, of course, for me to come now. It would but give your enemies a fresh grievance. No; you must go alone this time; but when you're ready, Karl, send for me, and I'll come. You have my promise."

The Prince of Novodnia dropped upon one knee and took his wife's hand in both his and kissed it. His own hands trembled a little under hers, and his eyes were moist.

"You are the noblest woman in the world. Eleanor," said he, "as you are the most beautiful. You promise me a life so near to heaven that I tremble to think of it. You do not love me now—— Nay, let us be honest, you never really loved me, even long ago before—before that dreadful veil fell. But I pray that you may come to love me in the future. It seems to me that no love so great as mine could fail, in time, to win a love in return. I shall be an abler general, Eleanor, a braver soldier, a better ruler for what you've promised me just now. Old Von Altdorf shall have a better word to say for me before the next month is over."

He rose to his feet and stood before her, heels together, at attention.

"Have I your leave to go, Princess?" he asked. He was holding his lips in a thin, firm line, and he frowned a little in his effort to remain calm. It tore him sadly, poor gentleman, to leave her, as he must, for what might be the last time. He knew well enough the peril that lay before him.

But the Princess Eleanor bent her head with a little, kind, tender smile and watched him while he marched stiffly out of the room, turning at the door to bow again and go through it backward, bowing still, as one leaves the presence of royalty.

Then the Princess turned her head upon the high, stuffed back of the chair and laid her cheek against it with a little moan of utter, hopeless dreariness.

Her cousin Jessica Mannering, happening into the room an hour later, found her so, and dropped upon her knees beside the chair, holding the Princess's hand against her cheek.

"He's gone, Eleanor?" she whispered. "The Prince has gone?"

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"Yes, oh, yes, he's gone," said the Princess. "I have promised to follow him when he sends for me, when the troubles and fighting are over."

"Eleanor, Eleanor!" cried Miss Mannering, staring into her cousin's face. "You—you're going to him—to the Prince? After—everything? Oh, Eleanor! Why," she went on presently, in a shocked, amazed voice, "why, it's wicked—it's, it's—almost immoral! You don't love him. You can never love him after—what has—happened. Oh, say you're not going, dear!"

"Why, yes," said the Princess quietly, "I'm going. Love him? Oh, no! I shall never love anyone again. You don't seem to understand. That part of me is quite dead. But I shall make him a good and faithful wife. I shall make him happy. What does my happiness matter?"

"And you'll go?" said Miss Jessica Mannering slowly. "You'll go to this simple, faithful gentleman, as his wife, when you love another man—will love him as long as you live? Ah, surely you're not the Eleanor I've known!"

"I don't love the other man!" cried the Princess in a hoarse, shaking voice. "I don't love him! I tell you I hate him! I can't think of him without a shudder! Oh, Jess, Jess! help me not to think of him, dream mad, sweet dreams of him, see his face, night and day, before me! Don't talk of him, Jess, darling! Help me to forget him! Help me to hate him as I must hate him, Jessica. I'm another man's wife; I'm the Prince's wife, and I'm going to him soon. Jess, help me to hate the man I—love, God forgive me! The man I must love till I—die! Oh, Jess, Jess! do you know what love is? It's the bitterest agony in all God's bitter world!"

(*To be concluded.*)

COUNSEL OF QUIETNESS.

I SHALL keep quiet on the low lone verge
By which your way left mine, to knit no more;
But when I lean my tears against you still,
Think, 'tis the north wind at your bolted door!

I shall keep quiet, as the sunlight sleeps
On one beloved Altar that we knew;
The things I meant to tell you shall suffice
In that long leisure lorn hearts hold in view.

I shall keep quiet, as a rosary lies
Pent in pale palms upon a pulseless breast—
Cold beads in colder fingers, pressing down
The deathless tale of bygone prayers at rest.

I shall keep quiet; as the Shadow creeps
That ever on Love's brink is close to fall;
In life, I shall not vex you; when you die,
I think I shall keep quietest of all.

I shall keep quiet, even though I grieve—
As the rose guards the folding of its flush;
Or as the night, bestrewn with silent stars,
Thrills to the flare of morning's conquering blush.

I shall keep quiet as a tide to come
Breaks in the noiseless ripples on a beach;
Or as the fated purple in the vine—
I shall keep quiet—till Death gives me speech!

ETHEL M. HEWITT.

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CONCERNING ESSAYS

BY A BOY WHO WROTE ONE.

THE thing I wrote about our school sports and our mothers will probably be remembered. At least, I hope so; for there isn't much use in writing things just for people to forget them, and when I take a great deal of trouble I like it to be appreciated. (No one need think that, because I use long words, I am not writing this myself. I can generally find someone with nothing better to do than to spell them for me; and, if not, I can look them out in a dicker just as well as a grown-up.)

Well, what I started to say was that I need not repeat what I've said already about our school. I know I conveyed the impression that it's a jolly decent one; and that will do to go on with. One of its most agreeable features is the breaking-up day. Prizes are given for several different subjects in each class, so it is better to be at school now than in those dark ages when all the subjects were lumped together, and only one prize given in each class for best marks in everything. I believe that really happened many years ago, although it seems hard to credit it now. Human nature, especially among schoolmasters, has made great advances within the last century. So has science; but it is idle to hope that I am the first person who has made this remark.

To return to my subject, which is Essays, although I haven't mentioned them yet: I must also explain that, in addition to the regular school supply of prizes, an interested parent sometimes offers one for a special subject of his own choosing. When I said "interested," I meant nothing invidious, as might be supposed by people who know that on two occasions the parents' own sons got the parents' own prizes. This was far from my mind, because it is a well-authenticated fact that the parents were very much annoyed on these occasions, which couldn't be helped. I only meant that they were interested in the school and the boys, especially those who were not their own sons.

To get back to Essays, I should say at

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once that these are generally the special subjects for which outsiders offer prizes; and the reason is plain. Every amateur rotter thinks himself capable of judging an essay, and he gets a comfortable feeling when he fancies he is encouraging polite literature. I know this is so, because my father, who is a man above subterfuge, did not hesitate to acknowledge, when I asked him, that these motives impelled him to offer a prize for the best essay on the subject of "Character." Also he said he expected to have some fun with the papers sent in, and I felt that I should not be doing my duty as a son if I did not point out to him that such expectations were a sign of great hardness of heart. He contradicted me and said it was only a sporting tendency; so, as I wanted to be sporting too, I sneaked the papers after he had judged them, and made extracts. It didn't seem fair that he should have all the fun to himself. Then it didn't seem fair that I should keep it to myself, either, so I decided to write about it for publication; and no one's feelings need be hurt, because I shall be careful not to mention the real names of the boys.

Gray minor said in his essay: "It is the worst tray in any bodie's character to have no sence of honour." I quite agree with him, and that is why I am being particular to disguise the writers under assumed names.

"I'm afraid my father is inclined to frivol."

Bunker said: "Character is what people give to servants who are going to live with someone else. An Irish gentleman once wrote in his coachman's character, 'Patrick Sheehan has lived with me for three years, and during that time he was frequently sober.'" This was the whole of Bunker's essay, but my father said it was one of the best of the lot. I am afraid he is sometimes inclined to frivol. I have had to speak to him about it. I mean my father, not Bunker. Bunker is merely an ass.

White said: "Nearly all human beings have a little good in them, even if it is hardly worth speaking about," and that seemed to please my father, too.

Green's was the funniest, because of his spelling. He said: "An exzampell of good character in a soulcher is to be gloris in war, as in the charg of the life begade which whent half a leg onward. A nother way to show good character is to tell the troughth alwaies."

Brown (who knows how to take care of himself) said: "I do not think it is wright to do everything your chum wants you to do, because he might lead you into no end of a row. It is always wright to be on the safe side." Just like Brown.

Parker said: "It is a great proof of character to stick up for your chum. If other boys call him names, you should go and call them names back in return; and if other boys smack his head, you should smack all the heads of the other boys." I always considered Parker a jolly decent sort.

Morris said: "I don't know anything about character in particular; but, judging by grown-ups' remarks that I have overheard, it seems that it can sometimes be spoilt, just like clothes, by people it doesn't belong to. Some old ladies came to tea at our house yesterday, and I heard my mother say afterwards that they had torn Mrs. Blank's character to shreds. Another time I heard someone say that Mrs. Dash hadn't a rag of a character left, so I suppose some old ladies had been tearing hers, too, which leads one to suppose that their own were not very good. Perhaps they tore up Mrs. Blank's and Mrs. Dash's to mend their own."

Morris repeats words too close together,

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which is bad composition; but, all the same, my father decided to give him the prize. He said he was looking for ideas, and not for style. My essay was passed over in silence, which I don't think was fair, merely because my father did not want to give the prize to his own son; and I can't see why he should have made such a point of not giving it to me, considering the thing had happened before. I couldn't help being hurt in my feelings; and, just to let it be seen that I had some cause, I am going to copy out a page, word for word, and show the kind of writing my relations regard with contempt, proving that a prophet has no honour in his own house. Before I begin I must explain that I had neither friends nor dickers to consult when I was writing the essay. That is why the spelling is somewhat defective; but it is the grace of the language, and not the spelling, which should fairly be considered in essay writing.

This is what I said: "There are two kinds of catarack, the kind you get on your eye and the kind like Niagara. Between these two there is realy no comparasin to be made, the kind like Niagara being so much superior. Travellers have such a high opinyin of the latter that they sometimes bring the water home in bottles, to show their friends what it looks like; but if the friends had cataracks on their eyes, they couldn't see any diferance between Niagara water and any other water, which prooves how compleatly one kind of catarack destroys the other. This is the habit of nature. Everything destroys something else. All people with realy good taste admit that there is great beauty in a first-class catarack like Niagara, except the people with cataracks on their eyes, who can't see because of their afliction even when their taste is good, which is very sad."

When I had got as far as this, I happened, while pausing to think how I should begin the next sentence, to glance up at the blackboard on which the subject of the essay was written. Anyone gifted with imagination can fancy what my horror was when I noticed for the first time that the word was "Character," and not "Catarack," as I had supposed.

I suppressed my feelings as well as possible, considering that there was no use in crying over spilt ink, and at once began to think what I could say about character, and how I could best make up for lost time. But my head, by then, was so full of cataracts that I could not make room in it for anything else. I had whole pages of beautiful things to say about waterfalls and blind people; and, if I had gone on and

"'Some old ladies came to tea at our house.'"

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said them, my essay would have been a masterpiece, although on the wrong subject. I regret now that I did not do so. I might at least have proved at greater length that I had the gift of composition ; and, even as it was, I think anyone but a father would have given me credit for a better flow of language than that shown by the other boys.

I know some chaps who don't hesitate to call their fathers beasts when annoyed by them ; and, although I don't think it proper to go so far as that, I can't pretend to deny that I felt far from satisfied with his treatment of me on this occasion. About the essay itself he said absolutely nothing, although he was ready enough to admire three lines of utter rot like Bunker's ; and what he said about me was a good deal worse than nothing. He said I was a feather-brained donkey, always running my head against stone walls for want of looking before me, and that it served me jolly well right to be put out of the running by my own beastly carelessness. Or words to that effect. I brought the conversation to a speedy end, because it is a painful thing to see one's father making an exhibition of ill-temper and prejudice, and I thought it wise to give him time to recover his equanimity before having anything more to say to him. There was a slight coolness between us for the rest of that day ; but when he came to the breaking-up, and saw that I got the Latin prize with a hundred and fifty marks to spare, he was so pleased that he tipped me a sov., and I couldn't help feeling that, after all, he might be a great deal worse than he is, and that one should never neglect to make allowances for the foibles of elderly people. Later on I chanced to hear in an accidental manner of his admitting surreptitiously to someone that my essay had amused him more than any of the others, but he did not think it would be good for me to know it. Now, I should very much like to know what I am to understand from that.

"What my horror was when I noticed for the first time that the word was 'Character,' and not 'Catarack,' as I had supposed."

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THE CAREER OF JOAN CARTHEW:

THE ADVENTURES OF A GIRL WHO HAD NOTHING AND WANTED EVERYTHING.

By Mrs. C. N. WILLIAMSON.*

No. V.—THE COUP OF "THE PLANET."

IT is like stating that the world is round to say that London is the best of hiding-places. It is the best, because there are many Londons, and one London knows practically nothing about any of the other Londons. When, therefore, Mercy Milton disappeared from Northmuir House, Belgrave Square, Joan Carthew promptly appeared at the old camping-ground, the boarding-house in Woburn Place.

Joan was no longer penniless, and as far as Lord Northmuir was concerned, she was easy in her mind. A man of his stamp was unlikely to risk the much-prized "honour of his name" to seek her with detectives; while, unassisted, he would have to shrug his weary old shoulders and resign himself to loss and loneliness.

But ambition kindled restlessness. She grudged wasting a moment when her fortune had to be made, her permanent place in life fixed. Besides, she was dissatisfied with her adventure in the house of Lord Northmuir. She had not come off badly, yet it galled her to remember that in self-defence she had been driven to confess her scheme to its victim, and that—this expedient not proving efficacious—she had eventually been forced to run away like the coward she was not. On the whole, she had to admit that if Lord Northmuir had not in the end got the better of her, he had come near to doing so. The sharp taste of failure was in her mouth, and the only way to be rid of it was to get the better of somebody else—somebody disagreeable, so that the sweets of success might be unmixed with bitterness.

Existence as Lord Northmuir's adopted relative had been deadly dull; existence as his wife would have been worse; and the remembrance of boredom was too vivid still for Joan to regret what she had sacrificed. Nevertheless, she realised that it had been a sacrifice which she would not a little while ago have believed herself fool enough, or wise enough, to be capable of making. She wanted her reward, and that reward must be new excitements, difficulties, and dangers.

"I should like to do something big on a great London paper," she said to herself on the first night of her return to Woburn Place. "What fun to undertake a thrilling journalistic mission, and succeed better than any man! I wonder whether Mr. Bainbridge, who was a reporter on *The Planet*, is here still. He wasn't at dinner, but then he used often to be away. I must ask in the morning."

Joan went to sleep with this resolve in her mind, and before breakfast she had carried it out. Mr. Bainbridge was still one of Miss Witts' boarders, and had often inquired after Miss Carthew. He had come in late last night, was now asleep, but would be down to luncheon, and there was no doubt that he would be delighted to see the object of his solicitude.

All turned out as Miss Witts prophesied, and Joan was even nicer to the reporter than she had been before. He invited her to dine that evening at an Italian restaurant, and she consented. When they had come to the sweets, Mr. Bainbridge could control his pent-up feelings no longer, and was about to propose when Joan stopped him.

"We are too poor to indulge in the luxury of being in love," said she, with a sweet frankness which took the sting from the rebuff and dimly implied hope for the future. "I shall not marry until I am earning as much money as—as the man I love. I could not be happy unless I were independent. Oh, Mr. Bainbridge! if you do care to please me, prove it by introducing me to the editor of your paper! I want to ask him for work."

The stricken young man felt his throat suddenly dry. In his first acquaintance with Joan he had boasted of his "influence"

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with the powers that were upon that new and phenomenally successful daily, *The Planet*. As a matter of fact, the influence existed in Bainbridge's dreams, and there only. Sir Edmund Foster, the proprietor and editor, hardly knew him by sight, and probably would not recognise him out of Fleet Street. To ask such a favour as an introduction for a strange young girl, however attractive, was almost as much as the poor fellow's place was worth, but he could not bear to refuse Joan.

"Sir Edmund let his eyes linger for a few seconds."

"Tell Sir Edmund that I have information, important to the paper, for his private ear," added the girl, reading her admirer's mind as if it had been a book.

"But—but if—er—you haven't really anything which he——" stammered Bainbridge.

"Oh, I have! I guarantee he shall be satisfied with me and not angry with you. Only I must see him alone. Tell him I come from"—Joan hesitated for an instant, but only for an instant—"from the Earl of Northmuir."

Bainbridge was impressed by the name and her air of self-confidence. Encouraged, he promised to use every effort to bring about the introduction, if possible, the very next day. If he succeeded, he would telegraph Joan the time of the appointment, which would certainly not be earlier than three in the afternoon, as Sir Edmund never appeared at the office until that hour.

"Then I won't wait for the telegram and give him a chance to change his mind before I can drive from Woburn Place to Fleet Street," said Joan. "I will be at the office at three in the afternoon, and wait until something is settled, if I have to wait till three in the morning."

The next day, after luncheon, Joan chose her costume with extreme care, as she invariably did when it was necessary to equip herself for conquest. Radiant in pale blue cloth edged with sable, she presented herself at the offices of *The Planet*. There was a waiting-room at the end of a long corridor, and there she was bidden to wait; but instead of remaining behind a closed door, as soon as her guide was out of sight, she began walking up and down near the stairway where Sir Edmund Foster must sooner or later pass. She had never seen the great man, but she remembered his photograph in one of the illustrated papers.

Presently a tall, smooth-shaven, sallow man, with eagle features and bags under his keen eyes, came rapidly along the corridor,

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accompanied by a much younger, less impressive man, who might have been a secretary. Joan advanced, pretending to be absorbed in thought, then stood aside with a start of shy surprise and a look nicely calculated to express reverence of greatness. Sir Edmund Foster glanced at the apparition and let his eyes linger for a few seconds as his companion rang the bell of the lift, close to the wide stone stairway.

"When he hears that there is a young woman waiting to see him, he will remember me, and the recollection may influence his decision," thought Joan, who did not undervalue her beauty as an asset.

Perhaps it fell out as she hoped (things often did), for she had not read more than three or four back numbers of *The Planet*, which lay on the waiting-room table, when Ralph Bainbridge, flushed and tremulous with excitement, came to say that Sir Edmund had consented to see her at once.

Without seeming as much overpowered as he expected, the girl prepared to enter the presence of greatness. But she was not in reality as calm as she appeared. The thunderous whirr of the printing-machines had almost bereft her of the capacity for thought, just at the moment when she wished to think clearly. Her nerves were twanging like the strings of a violin which is out of tune, and it was an intense relief to be shot up in the alarmingly rapid lift to a quieter region. The rumbling roar was deadened on Sir Edmund's floor, and as the door of his private office closed on her, it was shut out altogether.

"Miss Carthew, from Lord Northmuir," the famous editor said. "I believe you have some interesting information for me." He smiled with a certain dry benignity, for Joan was very pretty, and he was, after all, a man. "I think I saw you downstairs."

"I saw you, Sir Edmund." Joan's manner was dignified now, rather than shy. "I trust you will not be angry, but within the last two hours everything has changed for me. Lord Northmuir, whom I know well through my cousin, Miss Mercy Milton, his ward (you may have heard of her; we are said to resemble each other), has now changed his mind about allowing the piece of information I meant for you to be published. He has forbidden his name to be used, but it was too late to stop that. I can only beg, for my cousin Miss Milton's sake more than my own, that you will not let the fact come to his ears; if it should, she will suffer."

"You need not fear that," Sir Edmund reassured her; "but if you have no information to give me, Miss—er——"

"I had to come and explain why I hadn't," Joan cut in. "I hope you won't blame poor Mr. Bainbridge for putting you to this trouble. It isn't his fault, and he doesn't even know."

"Who is Mr. Bainbridge? Oh, ah! yes, of course. Pray don't regard it as a trouble. Quite the contrary. But unfortunately I——"

"You would say you are a very busy man," Joan threw into the editor's suggestive pause. "I won't take up much more of your time. But I want to say that, although I have nothing of value, as I hoped, to tell, I shall have later, if you will consent to engage me on your staff."

Sir Edmund laughed. He evidently considered Joan as a spoiled darling of Society with a new whim. "My dear young lady!" he exclaimed, "in what capacity, pray? We do not devote space to fashions, even in a Saturday edition. Would you come to us as a reporter, like your friend Mr. Bainbridge?"

"As a special reporter," amended Joan. "I would undertake any mission of importance——"

"There are none going begging on *The Planet*. But" (this soothingly by way of sugaring a dismissal) "you have only to get hold of something good and bring it to me. For instance, some nice, spicy little item such as whether the Cabinet intend to issue an ultimatum to Russia. We would pay you quite well for that, you know, provided you gave it to us in time to publish ahead of any other paper."

"How much would you pay me?" asked Joan, nettled at this chaffing tone of the famous man.

"Enough to buy a new frock and perhaps a few hairpins; say a hundred pounds."

"That isn't enough," said Joan; "I should want a thousand."

Sir Edmund turned a sudden, keen gaze upon the girl; then his face relaxed. "We might rise to that. At all events, I'm safe in promising it."

"It *is* a promise, then?"

"Oh, certainly."

"Thank you. Let me see if I understand clearly. I'm not quite the baby you think, Sir Edmund. I read the papers—yours especially—and take, I trust, an intelligent interest in the political situation. Now, the latest rumour is that Russia is secretly planning a *coup de main* upon Constantinople.

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What you would like to know is whether there is truth in the rumour, and whether, in that event, England would declare war."

"Exactly. That is what all the papers are dying to find out."

"If you could get the official news before any of them, you would give the person who obtained it for you a thousand pounds. If, in addition, they, or one of them—let us say *The Daily Beacon*—got the *wrong* news on the same day, you would no doubt add five hundred to the original thousand; for revenge is sweet, even to an editor, I suppose, and *The Beacon* has, I have heard, contrived to be first in the field on one or two important occasions within the last few years."

This allusion was a pin-prick in a sensitive place, for Joan was aware that *The Daily Beacon* and *The Planet* were deadly rivals as well as political opponents. Bainbridge had told her the tale of *The Planet's* humiliation by the enemy, and she had not forgotten. *The Beacon* had been able, at the very time when *The Planet* was arguing against their probability, to assert that certain political events would take place, and in time these statements had been justified, to the discomfiture of *The Planet*.

Sir Edmund frowned slightly. "*The Daily Beacon* possesses exceptional advantages," he sneered. "It is difficult for less favoured journals to compete with it for political information."

"I believe I can guess what you refer to." answered Joan. "I hear things, you know, from my cousin, Miss Milton." (This to shield Bainbridge.) "Lord Henry Borrowdaile, an Under Secretary of State, is a distant relative of Mr. Portheous, the proprietor of *The Daily Beacon*, and it is said that there has been a curious leakage of diplomatic secrets, once or twice, by which *The Beacon* profited."

"You are a well-informed young lady."

"I hope to earn your cheque as well as your compliment," said Joan. "Perhaps you will write it before many days have passed."

"It must be before many days, if at all."

"I understand that time presses, if you are to be first in the field, for the great secret can't be kept from the public for more than a week or ten days at most. But look here, Sir Edmund, would you go that extra five hundred if, on the day that your paper published the truth about the situation, *The Beacon* made a fool of itself by printing exactly the opposite?"

"Yes," said the editor, "I would."

"Well, we shall see what we shall see," returned Joan. She then took leave of Sir Edmund, who was certainly not in a mood to blame Bainbridge for an introduction under false pretences, even if he were far from sure that the beautiful Miss Carthew could accomplish miracles.

As for Joan, her head was in a whirl. She wanted to do this thing more than she had ever wanted anything in her life, though it had not entered her head a few moments ago. She would not despise fifteen hundred pounds; but it was not of the money she was dreaming as she told her cabman to drive to Battersea Park, and keep on driving till ordered to stop. The strange girl could always collect and concentrate her thoughts while driving, and this was her object now.

Joan had never met Lord Henry Borrowdaile, but during her year at Northmuir House she had known people who were friends or enemies of the young man and his wife. She had her own reason for listening with interest to intimate talk about the character and private affairs of persons who were important figures in the world, for at any time she might wish to use knowledge thus gained. She did not believe, from what she had heard, that Lord Henry Borrowdaile, son of the Marquis of Wastwater, was a man to betray State secrets for money. He was "bookish" and literary, and though he was not rich, neither did he covet riches. But he did adore his beautiful young wife, and was said by those who knew him to be as wax in her hands. She was popular, as well as pretty; was vain of being the leader of a very gay set, and dressed as if her reputation depended upon being the best-gowned woman in London. Because Lady Henry posed as an *ingénue*, who scarcely knew politics from polo, Joan suspected her. "It is she who worms out secrets from her husband and sells them to Portheous," Joan said to herself. "Oh! to be a fly on the wall in the Borrowdailes' house for the next week!"

This wish was so vivid, that like a lightning flash it seemed to illumine the dim corners of the girl's brain. She suddenly recalled another story of the inestimable Bainbridge's, told in connection with the rivalry of *The Daily Beacon* and *The Planet*.

"An eminent statesman's servant told the secret of his master's intended resignation," she said to herself. "Why shouldn't a servant at the Borrowdailes'——"

She did not finish out the thought at the moment; the vista it opened was too wide

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to be taken in at a glance. But after driving for an hour round and round Battersea Park, the patient cabman suddenly received an order to go quickly to Clarkson's, the wigmaker. At the shop, the hansom was discharged, and it was a very different-looking fare which another cab picked up at the same door somewhat later.

About half-past five, a plump old countrywoman, with a brown tissue veil over her ruddy, wrinkled face, waddled into a greengrocer's not far from South Audley Street. She bade the young man in the shop a wheezy "Good day," and asked if she might be bold enough to inquire whether Lady Henry Borrowdaile's housekeeper were a customer. Yes, the youth admitted with pride, for anything in their line which was not sent up from the Marquis of Wastwater's, in the country, they had the honour of serving her Ladyship.

"Ah! I thought how it would be, your place being so near, and the nicest round about," said the old countrywoman. "The truth is, I have to go to the house on a disagreeable errand. I volunteered to do it for a friend, and I've forgotten the number. I've to break some bad news to one of the housemaids."

"Not Miss Jessie Adams, I hope!" protested the young man, blushing up to the roots of his light hair.

"Yes, it is poor Jessie," said the old woman. "You know her?"

"We've been walking out together the last six months. I suppose her father's took bad again, or—or worse?"

"He's living—or was when I left; but——" and the old-fashioned bonnet with the veil shook ominously. "Well, I must go and do my duty. I hope she'll be able to get home for a week or so."

A few minutes later, Joan, delighted with her disguise and the detective skill she was developing, rang the servants' bell at the Borrowdailes'. She had learned what she had hoped to learn, the name of one of the maids, and she had also learned something more—the fact that Jessie Adams had a father whose state of health would afford an excuse for absence; and the existence of a lover, who would probably urge immediate marriage if there were enough money on either side.

The old countrywoman with the brown veil was voluble to the footman who opened the door. She explained that she had news from home for Jessie Adams, and was shown into a servants' sitting-room, where presently

"'Count what's there.'"

appeared a fresh-looking girl with languishing eyes, and a full, weak mouth.

"Oh, I thought perhaps it would be Aunt Emmy!" exclaimed the young person in cap and apron.

"No, I'm not Aunt Emmy, but you may take it I'm a friend," replied the old woman. "Don't be frightened. Your father ain't so

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very bad, but your folks would be glad to have you at home if you could manage it. And, look here, my gell, here's good news for you. You may make a tidy bit of money by going, if you can get off at once—this very night. How much must you and that nice young man of yours put by before you can marry?"

"We can't marry till he sets up in business for himself, and it will take a hundred pounds at least," said the girl. "We've each got about ten pounds saved towards it. But what's ten pounds?"

"Added on to ninety it makes a hundred, and you can earn that by lending your place here for one fortnight to a niece of mine, who wants to be a journalist and write what the doings inside a smart house are like. She'd name no names, so you'd never be given away. All you'd have to do would be to tell the housekeeper your father was took bad, and would she let you go if you'd bring your cousin Maria in your stead—a clever, experienced girl, with the best references from Lord Northmuir's house?"

"My goodness me, you take my breath away!" gasped Jessie Adams. "How do I know but your niece is a thief who'd steal her Ladyship's jewels?"

"You don't know, except that I say she isn't. But, anyhow, what does it matter to you? You don't need to come back or ever be in service again. Here's the ninety pounds in gold, my dear. You can bite every piece, if you wish; and you've but to do what I say to get them before you walk out of this house. You settle matters with the housekeeper, and I'll have my niece call on her within the hour."

The girl with the languishing eyes and the weak mouth had her price, like many of her betters, and it happened to be exactly ninety pounds. Joan had brought a hundred, and considered that she had made a bargain. Jessie consented to speak to the housekeeper, and the countrywoman departed. By this time it was dusk. She took a four-wheeler and drove to the gates of the Park. In a dark and lonely spot the outer disguise was whisked off, and the paint wiped from her face. Underneath her shawl she wore a neat black dress, suitable for a housemaid in search of a situation. This, too, Joan had thoughtfully obtained at Clarkson's, whence her pale blue cloth had been despatched by messenger to Woburn Place. The bonnet was quickly shaped into a hat; the stuffing which had plumped out the thin, girlish form was wrapped in the shawl which had concealed it, and hidden under a bush. Joan's own hair was combed primly back from her forehead, and strained so tightly at the sides as to change the expression of her face completely. "Cousin Maria" was as different from Miss Joan Carthew as a mouse is from a bird of Paradise.

Cream could not be more velvety soft than Joan's voice, the eye of a dove more mild than hers, as she conversed with Lady Henry Borrowdaile's housekeeper. And she was armed with a magnificent reference. There had been a Maria Jordan at Lord Northmuir's, as housemaid, in Joan's day there, but the real Maria had gone to America, and it was safe and simple to write in praise of this young person's character and accomplishments, signing the document Mercy Milton. At worst, even if Lady Henry's housekeeper sent the reference to Lord Northmuir's housekeeper, the imposition could not be proved. Maria might have had time to come back from America, and Miss Milton, now departed, might have consented to please the housemaid by giving her a written recommendation.

But Joan's manner as an applicant to fill her cousin's place was so respectful and respectable, and the need to decide was so pressing, that Lady Henry's housekeeper resolved to accept Jordan, so to speak, on face value. That same night Jessie Adams went home (or somewhere else), and her cousin stepped into the vacant niche.

Meanwhile, Joan had, on the plea of picking up her luggage, driven to one or two cheap shops in the Tottenham Court Road, and provided herself with a tin box and a suitable outfit for a superior housemaid. She was thankful to find that she would have a room to herself, and delighted to discover that Jessie Adams and Mathilde, Lady Henry's own maid, had been on terms of friendship. Their rooms adjoined; Jessie had been teaching Mathilde English in odd moments, and Mathilde had often obligingly carried messages to the enamoured greengrocer.

Joan lost not a moment in winning her way into Mathilde's good graces, wasting the less time because she had already made preparations with a view to such an end. She had bought a large box of delicious sweets, which she pretended her own "young man" had given her, and this she placed at the French girl's disposal. It happened that Lady Henry was dining out and going to the theatre afterwards that night, and Mathilde, being free, visited Maria easily in

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her room, where she sat on the bed, swinging her well-shod feet and eating cream chocolates. Maria, in the course of conversation, chanced to mention that her "young man" was the partner of a French hairdresser in Knightsbridge; that the two were intimate friends; that the hairdresser was young, singularly handsome, well-to-do, and looking out for a Parisienne as a wife. This Admirable Crichton was in France at present, on business, Maria added, but he would return in the course of a fortnight, when Maria's "young man" should effect an introduction, as she was sure that Monsieur Jacques would fall in love at first sight with Mathilde.

Mathilde pretended indifference, but she thought Maria the nicest girl she had met in England, far more *chic* than Jessie; and when she heard that her new friend longed to be a lady's maid, she offered to coach her in the art. Maria was gushingly grateful, for though she had (she said) already acted as maid to one or two ladies, they had not been "swells" like Lady Henry, and lessons from Mathilde would be of inestimable value.

"I suppose," she went on coaxingly, "that if I showed you I could do hair nicely, and understood what was wanted of a lady's maid, you wouldn't be took ill, and give me a chance to try my hand on Lady Henry? Practice on her Ladyship would be worth a lot of lessons, wouldn't it? My goodness! I'd give all my savings for such a chance in a house like this! Think of the help it would be to me afterwards to say I'd been understudy, as you might call it, to a real expert like Mathilde, Lady Henry Borrowdaile's own maid, and given great satisfaction in the part! It might mean a good place for me. I ain't jokin', mademoiselle. I've got twenty-five sovereigns saved up, and if you'll have neuralgia so bad you can't lift your head from the pillow for three or four days, those twenty-five sovereigns are yours."

"*Mais*, for me to have ze neuralgia, it do not make that milady take you for my place," said the laughing Mathilde.

"No, but leave that to me. You shall have the money just the same."

"All right," said Mathilde, giggling, scarce believing that her friend was in earnest. "I have ze neuralgia *demain*—to-morrow."

Joan sprang up and went to the new tin box. She bent over it for a moment, with her back to Mathilde; then she turned, with a stocking in her hand—a stocking fat in the foot, and tied round the ankle with a bit of ribbon. "Count what's there," she exclaimed, emptying the stocking in Mathilde's lap.

There were gold and silver, and even a little copper. Altogether, the sum amounted to that which Maria had named, and a few shillings over.

Mathilde was dazzled. What with this bird in hand, and another in the bush (the eligible hairdresser), she was ready to do almost anything for Maria. Later that night, in undressing Lady Henry, she complained of suffering such agony that she feared for the morrow. Luckily, should she be incapacitated for a short time, there was a girl now in the house (a young person in the place of the first housemaid, absent on account of trouble in the family) who had been lady's maid and knew her business. Lady Henry was too sleepy to care what might happen to-morrow—indeed, scarcely listened to Mathilde's murmurings; but when to-morrow was to-day, and a sweet-faced, sweet-voiced girl announced that Mathilde could not leave her bed, the spoiled beauty remembered last night's conversation. After some grumbling, she consented to try what Jordan could do; and while the second housemaid pouted over Maria's work, Maria was busy ingratiating herself with Lady Henry—ingratiating herself so thoroughly that Mathilde would have trembled jealously for the future could she have seen or heard.

Joan was one of those rare creatures, born for success, who set their teeth in unbreakable resolve to do whatever they must do, well. Being a lady herself, with all a lady's fastidious tastes, she knew how a lady liked to be waited upon. She was not attracted by Lady Henry, whom men called an angel, and women "a cat," but she was as attentive as if her whole happiness depended on her mistress's approbation. Mathilde was efficient, but frivolous and flighty, sometimes inclined to sulkiness; and Lady Henry, superbly indifferent to the sufferings of servants, decided that she would not be sorry if Mathilde were ill a long time.

Two or three days went by; Joan kept the Parisienne supplied with *bonbons* and French novels, and carried up all her meals, arranged almost as daintily as if they had been for her Ladyship. Mathilde was happy, and Joan was—waiting. But her patience was not to be tried for long.

On the third day, she was told that her mistress was dining at home, alone with Lord Henry. This was such an unusual

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"'Sh!' she breathed."

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event that Joan was sure it meant something, especially when Lady Henry demanded one of her prettiest frocks. A footman, inclined to be Maria's slave, was smiled upon, intercepted during dinner, and questioned. "They're behaving like turtle-doves," said he.

Joan had expected this. "That little cat has guessed or discovered that everything is settled, and she means to get the truth out of him this evening, so that somehow she can give the news to *The Daily Beacon* to-night, in time to go to press for to-morrow," the girl reflected.

She was excited, but the great moment had come, and she kept herself rigidly under control, for everything depended upon calmness and fertility in resource. "They will have their coffee in Lady Henry's boudoir," Joan reflected, "and that is when she will get to work."

She thought thus on her way upstairs, carrying a dress of Lady Henry's, from which she had been brushing the marks of a muddy carriage-wheel. She laid it on a chair, and saw on another a milliner's box. Her mistress had not mentioned that she was expecting anything, and Joan's curiosity was aroused. She untied the fastenings, lifted a layer of tissue paper, and saw a neat, dark green dress, tailor-made, with a toque made of the same material and a little velvet. There was also a long, plain coat of the same cloth, with gold buttons, and on the breast pocket was embroidered an odd design in gold thread.

Joan suddenly became thoughtful. This dress was as unlike as possible to the butterfly style which Lady Henry affected, and all who knew her knew that she detested dark colours. Yet this costume was distinctly sombre and severe; and the name of the milliner was unfamiliar to Joan.

"It's like a disguise," the girl said to herself, "and I'll bet anything that's what it's for. She went to a strange milliner; she made a point of the things being ready to-night; she chose a costume which would absolutely change her appearance, if worn with a thick veil. And then that bit of embroidery on the pocket! Why, it's a miniature copy of the design they print under the title of *The Beacon*. It *is* a beacon, flaming! She means to slip out of the house when she's got the secret safe, and somebody at the office of the paper will have been ordered to take a veiled lady with such a dress as this up to Portheous' private office, without her speaking a word. Well—a lady will go there, but I hope it won't be Lady Henry."

Without stopping for an instant's further reflection, Joan caught up the box and flew with it to her own room, where she pushed it under the bed. She then watched her chance, and when no one was in sight, darted into the boudoir, where she squeezed herself behind a screen close to the door. She might have found a more convenient hiding-place, but this, though uncomfortable, gave her an advantage. If the two persons she expected to enter the room elected to sit near the fireplace, as they probably would, Joan might be able to steal noiselessly away without being seen or heard.

She had not had much time to spare, for ten minutes after she had plastered herself against the wall, Lord and Lady Henry came in. They went to the sofa in front of the fire and chatted of commonplaces until after the coffee and *Orange Marnier* had been brought. Then Lady Henry took out her jewelled cigarette-case, gave a cigarette to her husband and took one herself. To light hers from his, she perched on Lord Henry's knee, remaining in that position to play with his hair, her white fingers flashing with rings. She cooed to her husband prettily, saying how nice it was to be with him alone, and how it grieved her to see him weary and worried.

"Is the old Russian Bear going to grab poor Constantinople, darling?" she purred. "You know, precious, talking to me is as safe as talking to yourself."

"I know, my pet. Thank Heaven! we shall be spared war, for Russia has suddenly and unexpectedly backed down. Constantinople is safe; the ultimatum we issued settled matters completely."

"Oh, then, the ultimatum *was* sent?"

"Yes. If Russia had held firm, nothing could have prevented war. But for obvious diplomatic reasons, the papers must not be able to state officially that any negotiations of the sort have ever taken place. There has been a rumour, but that will die out."

"Ah, well, I'm glad there won't be war; but as *you're* not a soldier, and can't be killed, it wouldn't have broken my heart. Kiss me and let's talk of something amusing. Your poor pet gets a headache if she has to think of affairs of State too long."

Joan did not wait for the end of the last sentence. She began with the utmost caution to move the farther end of the screen forward, until she could reach the door-handle. With infinite patience she turned the knob at the rate of an inch a minute, until it was possible to open the door. Then she pulled

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it slowly, very slowly, towards her. At last she could slip into the corridor, where she had an instant of sickening fear lest she should be detected by a passing servant. Luck was with her, however; but instead of seizing the chance to run upstairs unseen, she stopped, shut the door as softly as it had been opened, and then knocked. Lady Henry's voice, with a ring of relief, called "Come in!" Joan showed herself on the threshold, and announced that a person from Frasquet's, of George Street, had called to say that by mistake a costume ordered by Lady Henry had been sent to the wrong address, but that search would at once be made, and the box brought to South Audley Street as soon as found.

Lady Henry sprang up with an exclamation of anger, and called down the vengeance of the gods upon the house of Frasquet.

"Might I suggest, your Ladyship, that I go with the messenger, and make sure of bringing back the box, if the dress is a valuable one?" asked Joan.

Lady Henry caught at this idea. Joan was bidden to run away and not to come back till she had the box. "I will give you a sovereign if you bring it home before midnight," she added.

Joan walked calmly out with the box from Frasquet's, took a cab, and drove to Woburn Place, where, in her own room, she dressed herself as Lady Henry had intended to be dressed. The frock and coat fitted sufficiently well, for Jordan and her mistress were somewhat of the same figure. An embroidered black veil, with one of chiffon underneath, completely hid her features; and, heavily perfumed with Lady Henry's favourite scent, at precisely a quarter to eleven she presented herself at the office of *The Daily Beacon*. A gesture of a gloved hand towards the flaming gold on the coat was as if a password had been spoken. She was conducted to a private office on the first floor, and there received by a bearded, red-faced man, who sprang up on her entrance.

"Well—well?" he demanded.

The veiled and scented lady put her finger to her lips.

"'Sh!" she breathed. Then, disguising her voice by whispering, she went on. "Russia intends to seize Constantinople. It's only a question of days, and we shall declare war. There! That's all, in a nutshell. I must run away at once."

"A thousand thanks! You're a brick!" Mr. Portheous pressed the gloved hand and left a cheque in it. "We shall go to press with this immediately."

Joan glanced at the cheque, saw it was for seven hundred pounds, and despised Lady Henry for cheapening the market. Her waiting cab drove her a few streets farther on, to the office of *The Planet*. A card with the name of Miss Carthew, and "Important private business" scrawled upon it, was the "Open, sesame!" to Sir Edmund Foster's door.

"Have you your cheque-book handy?" she nonchalantly asked.

"What for?"

"*Quid pro quo*." Joan rushed into her whole story, which she told from beginning to end, proving its truth by showing Mr. Portheous' cheque made out to Mrs. Anne Randall. "Lady Henry, no doubt, has an account somewhere under that name. She's too sharp to use her own," added the girl. "Do you believe me now?"

"Yes. You're wonderful. I shall risk printing the news exactly as you have given it to me."

"You won't regret your trust. But I don't want your cheque to-night. I'll take it to-morrow, when I can say: 'I told you so.'"

"Would you still like to come on our staff—at a salary of ten pounds a week?"

"No, thank you, Sir Edmund. I've brought off my big *coup*, and anything more in the newspaper line would be, I fear, an anti-climax. Besides, I want to play with my fifteen hundred pounds."

"What shall you do now?"

"Go back to the house which has the honour of being my home, change my clothes, hurry breathlessly to South Audley Street, and inform Lady Henry that her costume can't be found. She will then, in desperation, decide to send a note to *The Daily Beacon*, which, my prophetic soul whispers, she will order me to take."

"Shall you go?"

"Out of the house, yes—never, never to return, for my work there is done. But not to the office of *The Beacon*. Lady Henry's box shall be sent to her by parcel post to-morrow morning, and Mrs. Randall's cheque will be in the coat pocket. That will surprise her a little, but it won't matter to me; for, after having called here for my cheque, I think I'll take the two o'clock train for the Continent. I shall have plenty of money to enjoy myself, and I feel I need a change of air."

"You are wonderful!" repeated Sir Edmund Foster.

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THE EVENING RED
THE MORNING GREY
PROMISE GIVES OF
A VERY FINE DAY

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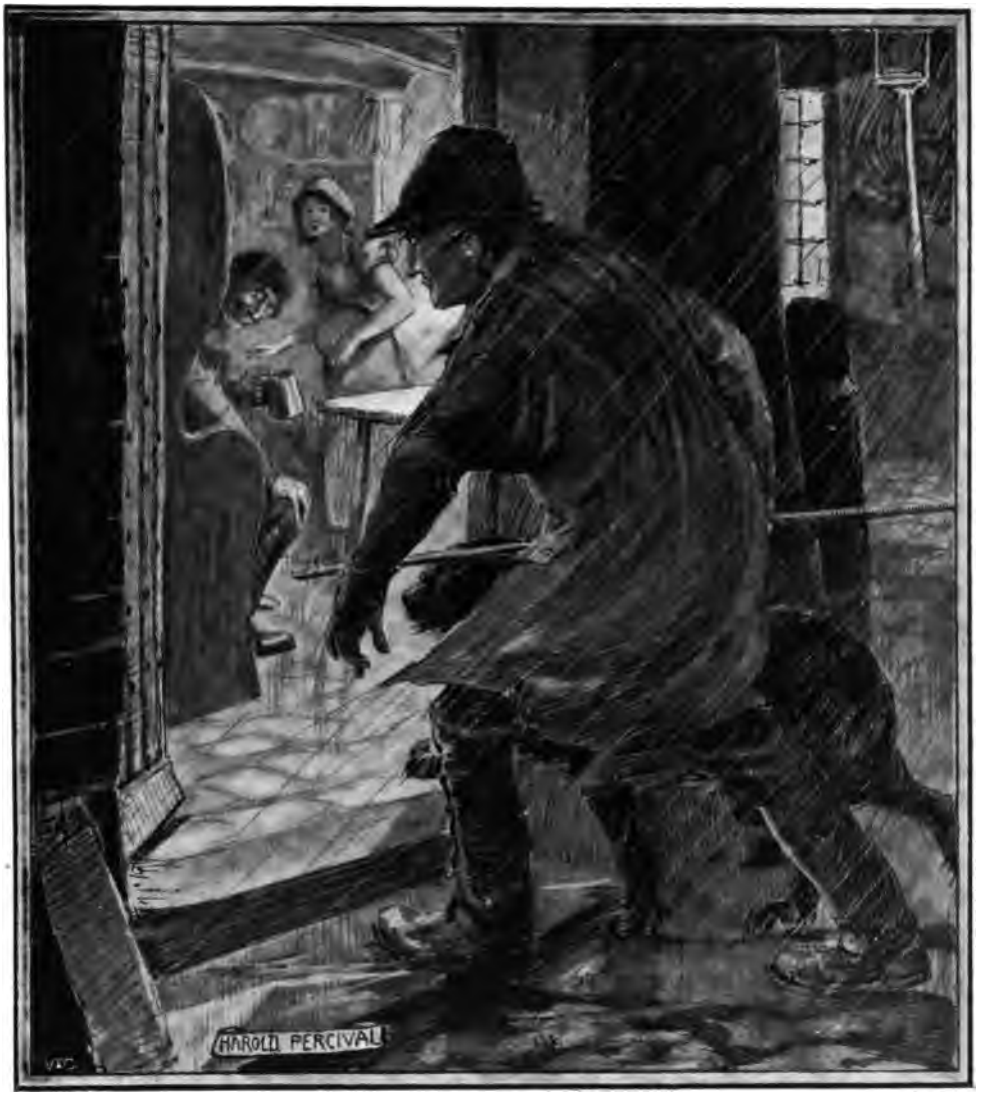

THE EVENING GREY
THE MORNING RED
SENDS THE SHEP-
HERD WET TO BED

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LIGHT ON LAMPS:

HOW THE ELECTRIC GLOW-LAMP IS MADE.

By HARRY GOLDING.

SOME things are not so simple as they look. An electric lamp is one of them. A small glass globe, bulged and slightly pointed; a trickily looped filament, with tips of platinum; a cap of brass or vitrite—and that is all. At least, it should be all; but unfortunately it very often isn't, and that is just where a great part of the trouble comes in. For, as the text-books of our childhood were fond of observing, "Nature abhors a vacuum," and has to be coerced with some severity before she will consent to it.

The difficulties of handling glass and of securing an approximately perfect vacuum are, however, common to a number of manufactures. Where the making of a glow-lamp presents such a fascinating field of study is in connection with the tiny thread that is called upon to bear the burden and heat not only of the day, but the tenfold worse night. Readers of "Gulliver's Travels" will recall the grimy academician of Lugado, who "had been engaged for eight years upon a project for extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers"; but even the feat of this worthy, had it succeeded, would have been no more wonderful than that actually accomplished by present-day electricians in evolving sunbeams, or their equivalent, out of cotton-wool. For the basis of that radiant "inside wire," as the uninitiated have been known to call the filament, is simply the harmless fibre of the cotton plant, which, instead of being pleasantly converted into calico in Lancashire, is destined by unkindly Fate to pass through some forty-five cruel processes in a lamp-factory.

Hitherto, for some mysterious reason, the manufacture of electric lamps has always been conducted with impenetrable secrecy; but at the Brook Green Works of the General Electric Co., Limited, at Hammersmith, where between three and four millions of the well-known "Robertson" lamps are turned out annually, the prying writer, who half expected to be stoned or electrocuted, found himself cordially welcomed. The managers even volunteered, with a complacency born of the knowledge that they make a good thing, to take him round and explain the different processes from start to finish. And very interesting most of them are, as the reader will agree, though it is difficult, even with the aid of photographs, exactly to explain them all.

MAKING THE FILAMENT.

"This," said the works manager, grasping a handful of fine cotton-wool, "is process number one," and he cast the offending ball

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MOUNTING THE FILAMENT ON PLATINUM WIRES.

into a vat containing a solution that looked like treacle or soft soap, but proved on inquiry to be a cellulose mixture of wool and chloride of zinc. When sufficiently cooked, this unpromising stuff is squeezed, sausage-like, through nozzles of varying degrees of fineness into tall glass jars containing spirit. In this stage it might easily be mistaken for vermicelli, and it looks about as appetising. The coils are left to harden in the liquid for three or four days, and are then immersed for twenty-four hours in running water to remove all trace of chemicals. They are next wound on to large revolving drums to dry. One of these drums will hold a length of filament that would stretch for half-a-mile, and at these works they use about fifty drums a day, sufficient to reach right across London. In the washing and drying processes considerable shrinkage takes place, and the finer threads now resemble homespun silk or horsehair. For lamps of different candle-power varying thicknesses of filament are, of course, necessary.

So far all has been plain sailing. The thread has now to undergo the ordeal by fire by way of preparation for the far worse ordeal of electrocution. Having been cut into lengths, it is wound—being still quite pliable—on to "formers," which answer the purpose of a lady's curling-tongs and give the characteristic loop so necessary to a self-respecting lamp. When filled, the formers are snugly packed in crucibles containing graphite and borne away to the infernal regions, where they are baked in ovens of varying temperatures for four-and-twenty hours. On emerging, the filament is as black and curly as a retriever's coat, and will never henceforth lose its shape. Indeed, to the ordinary eye, it now looks just about the same, except for the darker colour, as when actually in use in a lamp, and the casual onlooker might easily be led to believe the process of manufacture at an end. Much remains to be done, however, before the filament is fit for enclosure in the bulb.

The next step is to mount the two ends on platinum wires, an operation of such delicacy that only the deft fingers of women can successfully accomplish it. A machine cuts the platinum wire into strips of the requisite length, leaving at the end of each piece a tiny tube or socket into which the hairlike filament is dexterously insinuated

FLASHING.

and then tightened with a pinch of the tweezers. Platinum, as well as being one of the heaviest and most ductile of metals, is one of the dearest; and it may surprise

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the citizen who thinks eighteenpence a dear price for a lamp to know that the scarcely seen platinum leads alone cost from a penny to threehalfpence, according to the current market price. The leads are carefully counted out to each worker, and no waste is allowed in this department, even the sweepings of the floor being sold for a considerable sum.

But the joint between filament and platinum is far from satisfactory yet. In the next department—one of the most interesting in the factory—each worker has by her side a small tank of hydro-carbon, provided with a hinged cover that can be slammed down in an instant should necessity arise. Having been placed

TESTING THE ELECTRICAL RESISTANCE.

"OVERRUNNING."

on an electrically connected clip, the filament is lowered into the fluid, the operation automatically switching on the current. The platinum ends become white hot, and carbon is thereby deposited on the joints, establishing a perfect electrical and mechanical connection. This operation is attended by some danger, for it is impossible to ensure that the fluid will not ignite. Every precaution is taken, however, and when such an event occurs, as it does almost daily, all that the girl has to do is to bang down the cover and keep her head. Experience has shown that the latter is by far the more difficult requirement, and the workers are accordingly systematically trained to act with coolness in emergencies. On the occasion of our visit a false alarm of fire was purposely raised, and in the incredibly short space of a minute and thirty-five seconds every one of the 600 persons in the place (a large four-storeyed block) was safely outside, and the firemen had the water on and the hose in readiness.

The joint having been perfected, it is still necessary to make the filament of even electrical resistance throughout, and also to reduce that resistance to the proper point. It is therefore passed to the "flashing" room and placed under the glass receiver of an air-pump. The air having been exhausted, a hydro-carbon vapour is introduced and the current switched on, causing the filament to become incandescent and to absorb the surrounding carbon. The thin places get hotter than the rest, and carbon

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is more rapidly deposited on them, so that the unevenness is soon removed. Not until the galvanometer shows that the resistance has been brought down to the required degree is the filament withdrawn, and then it is seen to have turned literally grey in the process.

The thread is now at last considered fit for enclosure in the bulb which is to be its home. To place it in is by no means so easy an operation as might be thought. The workers in the glass-blowing department are mostly men, and a warm time they have of it. Each man has before him a revolving fireclay stand, bearing a distant resemblance to the egg-holders which grace our breakfast-tables. Each holder will contain about sixteen bulbs. Taking a bulb from the box in which it has arrived from the glass-factory, the operator melts it at the nipple by means of a gas flame and seals on a tube of glass. This is handy later on for exhausting the air, and is very useful in the present stage

BLOWING BULBS.

THE GLASS-BLOWING ROOM.

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EXHAUSTING THE BULBS.

as a handle. The bulb is now opened sufficiently at the other end to enable the filament to be passed in, after which the lips are closed by means of the blowpipe, only the ends of the platinum wires being left outside. The glass is tightly pinched round these to make quite sure that no air can afterwards leak in, and two small horns or projections are also made, in order, later, to secure the cap. As each bulb is closed it is placed on the holder to be annealed over the flame until the next is ready, when it is moved on round the stand and thus gradually cools.

Now comes the difficulty of the vacuum to which allusion was made at the outset. To secure a perfect light it is absolutely necessary to exclude all air from the bulb. In the next room the tubes which were sealed on to the nipples of the bulbs are stuck on to the glass orifices of the exhausting-chamber, and a mechanical pump is set to work. After it has done its best, or worst, there is still plenty of air left, so the bulb is passed on for twenty minutes to a mercury pump in order to produce a finer state of exhaustion. Some tons of mercury

"OBSCURING" BULBS FOR SHADED LAMPS.

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are constantly circulating in this room. When the exhaustion is as nearly complete as it can be made, the lamps are treated to a strong current, something like fifty per cent. more than they will ever be called upon to endure in actual use, the object of this "overrunning" being to drive any remaining gases from the filaments. Not all the lamps survive this drastic treatment. Indeed, from beginning to end, about thirty-three per cent. are discarded for one reason or another. Often the defects are trifling, and would be ignored by Continental makers; but once a firm has established a reputation it cannot afford to lower its standard. The lamps which emerge successfully from this preliminary test are then sealed at the nipple end and passed along for further tests. It is first necessary to make sure of the vacuum. If the bulb glows on being connected to an induction-coil, the vacuum is bad, and all the labour so far expended has been thrown away. Another test is made for endurance; and the lamps are then taken to the photometer, or light-measuring rooms, where, by means of prisms and other devices, the candle-power and consumption of each is exactly measured. They are then classified, and, after further independent tests to ensure that no error has been made in the record, and that the vacuum is still perfect, the lamps pass on to be capped.

For lamps of low voltage the cap is generally of brass: but vitrite is provided for lamps of high voltage.

The lamp may now at last be regarded as complete; but before it is allowed to leave the factory, it is subjected to still further tests, the most skilful and experienced hands being employed as final examiners. Then the name of the lamp is stamped on, with its voltage and candle-power; and after being carefully packed, it is ready to go forth to lighten our darkness.

MEASURING CANDLE-POWER.

Two further items of information will certainly be of use to the rapidly growing army of electric-light consumers. They both concern the question of cheapness. Lamps from abroad are frequently—indeed, generally—sold at prices much under those charged for lamps of English manufacture.

The difference is accounted for not so much by inferiority of materials as by the thorough and conscientious manner in which English makers reject all lamps that do not successfully endure the elaborate series of tests we have attempted to describe. A lamp of Continental origin—generally unstamped—*may* be as good, but the chances are very much against it. It is worth while to pay a trifle more for certainty.

Another thing. The life of a well-made lamp is calculated at about a thousand

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Photo by] [*H. King.*

THE FACTORY AND STAFF.

hours. Many users, with a mistaken idea of economy, continue to burn their lamps long after they have blackened and gone dull. It is a foolish policy, for one new lamp gives a light equal to two old ones, and costs only half as much for current.

THE FINAL TEST

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THE KING OF THE NORTHERN SLOPE.

By EDWIN CARLILE LITSEY.*

ALONG a path which a man's eye could not have seen, but which, even at night, was visible to the kind that dwell in the hills, a long, lithe object passed swiftly and without noise. It was down a knob-slope, in a diagonal course, the object came, and the night was only star bright, for the moon was late in coming. This quiet figure, which glided serpentlike on its way, was about three feet in length; its slender, round body was covered with short, thick hair, drab and mottled brown in colour, and had only a stump of a tail about three inches long. The head was bullet-round, the short, stubby ears pricked and alert, and the nose-muscles distended and twitched with every cautious step. The padded feet of this night rambler were almost as noiseless as the star-rays' fall. Scarcely a leaf was overturned, scarcely a dead twig snapped. His body, curving sinuously, would not have brushed an ant from the stem of a sapling. The King of the Northern Slope was hungry, and his present errand was to the sheepfold or pig-sty of the nearest farmer.

He was the biggest wild-cat in that part of the country, and his reign on the Northern Slope was respected and acknowledged by all the four-footed things that harboured and hunted in the hills. The mountains far eastward had dwindled away here to a chain of knobs, bisecting the country from east to west. Miniature mountains they were, indeed; wooded, rocky, untillable, and lonely. Wild-cats, foxes, and the smaller gentry of the forest, as squirrels, raccoons, and opossums, lived and throve upon this chain of knobs. But gradually those that had abode on the northern slope went over the crest to the other side, and left the field to the undisputed possession of the big cat, who did not care to have his preserves poached upon by the rag-tags and bob-tails of creation. Once a year he would go questing for a mate, boldly invading the southern side of the range, and coming not back until he had found the lady of his choice. Then, after awhile, a brood of whelps would be born in the secret lair of the King; and when these were scarcely able to fall about the floor of their birthplace in play, and bite at each other's sawed-off tails, the King would, one fine day, hustle them and their mother, his erstwhile bride, out of his home and over the crest of the range, to fare good or ill, as luck would send. At least, this was the story that the human people told, and this much goes to support the tale, that whereas those farmers living beyond the line of knobs to the southward lost but few hogs from nocturnal depredations, those living to the north were in nightly fear that morning would show a trail of blood from barnyard or pen. And the men-people had sat together night after night in council, with heads bobbing and tongues wagging, trying to evolve a plan whereby to capture or destroy this scourge of their fields and pastures. But they had failed. The truest-nosed hounds of the various packs scattered around could not keep his trail, but would lose the scent and return crestfallen and shamefaced. He was never seen within gun-shot, and they could not find his lair. But one thing they knew—that nothing else ran at night on the Northern Slope.

Picking his way as daintily as a satin-shod miss tips across a dirty street from carriage-door to house-door, the King pursued his diagonal course which would eventually bring him to a field adjoining the garden of a farmhouse. He had but little more than half completed his journey when to his quick ears came a sharp snap, and something struck him smartly on the back just behind his shoulders. He bared his teeth with a low growl of wrath and smote back blindly with one paw, which was rimmed with five curving claws unsheathed with lightning swiftness. At the same time there came the sound of huge wings beating the air to bear a heavy body up, and a hoot-owl laboriously made his way through the trees,

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his perch, a dead limb, having at last broken beneath his weight. Low on the ground two fiery eyes glared up in savage hate; then the long, white claws slowly drew back out of sight, and the cushioned feet moved on again.

It had been a long and hard winter for the King, and the spring had been slow in coming. There had been days when he could not leave his den; when the leaden clouds had unburdened themselves for hours at a time, and the snow had piled up, up, up over the very door of his home, and all familiar landmarks were obliterated. Then he must needs chafe inside his hiding-place; and when hunger seized him, the cold nipped him the harder, and it was a bitter battle to keep them both off. But his fur had grown heavy and thick, and he could curl up and sleep and forget that his stomach was gnawing within him. He had lived through too many winters and seen too many snows to venture out. For tracks can be seen by the men-people, and then it would be all over with him, for they would come and smoke him out. Once before, when he was younger, his life had been thus jeopardised, and it was only by finding another exit far off from the one where his enemies sat waiting that he escaped. The winter just passed had seen his endurance tested to the utmost. Tortured by starvation, he had at last determined to scout around on the top of the knob, when the half-covered entrance to his den was darkened and a striped-tailed raccoon came ambling in. One swift blow and then the King feasted royally, although his victim was old and bony and had but little blood in his carcass. But this stayed his craving maw for a few days longer, and then he crunched the dry bones and licked the snow in lieu of water, and waited for a thaw. It came at last, and the prisoned King sat just within his door and watched the snow disappear with gloating eyes. But even then there was danger in every step he took, for the soaked ground caught and held the scent of his tracks, and there were ever roaming the hills in search of him those lop-eared, thin-flanked, tireless hounds, the only four-footed things in all his kingdom that he feared. And they never came alone to do him fair battle, but always in overpowering numbers, with hereditary hate in their hearts. And so it was incumbent upon him to employ flight and wily woodcraft when dealing with these arch enemies; and such had been his cunning that he had always fooled them and shaken them from his tracks ere he crept tired, yet victorious, into his hidden chamber to rest.

The phantomlike figure trailing its way down the knob-slope reached the timber line without let or hindrance, save the single exception which we have seen. His back was still beset by occasional sharp pains where the limb had struck, and this fact did not heighten the quality of mercy in his heart, if, indeed, such a thing abode there. He halted for a moment on the edge of the cleared ground before trusting himself to the open, looked and listened with painful intentness; then a slender red tongue leaped from his mouth and swept his chops hungrily, for a peculiar odour was wafted to his nostrils across the field—it came from the backs of a bunch of sleeping shotes in the far-off corner of the barnyard. Discretion immediately gave place to the unsatisfied hunger of many days and the insatiable lust for blood. With swift bounds the King advanced across the field, which had been sown in wheat the fall before, and was now totally bare of vegetation. He reached the rail fence enclosing the garden and skirted it warily, every nerve keyed to its highest tension, for not a hundred feet away were the pack, sleeping the light dog-sleep under and about the house of their master, and they had been taught from puppyhood—nay, for generations even—to rouse and give chase at the wild-cat smell. The King knew this, but he had dared the same thing before and carried off a prize while the guardians of the flock slept. The mottled shape moved on with soundless steps, and in the shadow of the barn it stopped. But it was only to glance about to see that everything was still, and that none of his blood-enemies had scented him in their slumbers. Again he moved forward—to stop rigidly. A fat fowl was roosting on the top of a stake in the fence corner three feet from him. This was more delicate than hog-meat, but there was less of it, and the marauder was half-starved—he felt that he could have eaten a full-grown ox and then slept peacefully. So the big rooster dreamed on, not knowing how narrowly he had escaped, and the sly cat resumed his creeping journey. His trained and faultless nostrils had already located the exact whereabouts of his prey, and in a few moments he was as close as he dared to go until the final move.

The fence was high, and the rails were placed too closely for even his sleek body to squeeze through a crack. He could see the half-grown shotes in the corner, sleeping

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"With one gigantic bound, cleared the barrier before him."

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huddled together. They were very still. At times one would flick an ear; another would give a spasmodic kick at some tormenting flea; and a third would "Ugh! Ugh!" drowsily and relapse into unconsciousness. It was easy game for an old hunter—and how juicy their sides looked in the starlight! But the King had hoped for a crack through which to crawl. True, it would be no effort for him to scale the highest fence ever built, but top rails have a way of falling off with a terrible clatter, and sometimes, if the spoil be very heavy, it is not such an easy matter to get back over the fence to freedom. In the midst of his cogitations a light wind sprang up, and he noted with dismay that it blew from him straight to the houseyard—to the keen nostrils of the dog-pack. Indecision vanished. With eyes glowing like sulphurous coals, he crouched low and swiftly inched his hind-feet and haunches up under his belly. But the semi-darkness deceived him, and he miscalculated the distance. The spring was too strong, and he clutched wildly at the top rail as he passed over, only to drag it crashing from its place. With a quickness found only in the tribe to which he belonged, the great cat touched the ground only to rise in another leap which landed him in the midst of the half-awakened and dazed pigs. The deadly claws were bare, and they ripped at the throat of a victim as the wicked teeth closed upon its neck and snapped the vertebra. With the gush of hot blood in his face and the smell of it deluging his nostrils, caution and secrecy took wing, and the King stopped long enough to throw back his head and give one terrifying scream of victory. Then he seized the limp form before him in his powerful jaws and, with one gigantic bound, cleared the barrier before him and was gone.

Almost instantly another sound went up to the listening stars; the full-throated bay of alarm from the gaunt leader of the dog-pack. Then over the yard fence brown shadows flitted; singly and in pairs, and a score of swift feet passed hither and thither while sniffing noses searched for the trail. They found the place of the slaughter, and the tracks of the bold marauder smelled fresh and strong. Then, for a time, the circling forms were baffled. But quickly one, leaner and wirier than the rest, had wriggled through the fence, and his keen-voiced, excited yelp announced that the trail had been found again. Leaping, climbing, crawling, the whole pack were soon over, and with waving tails and deep-mouthed cries took up the pursuit. It was not the first time that they had followed the King of the Northern Slope; but now he was close at hand, for his tracks were hot in the soft soil of the wheat-field.

The wild-cat had barely reached the timber line when his pursuers took up his trail in earnest. His progress across the field had been slow, for the ground was yielding, and the burden which he carried was almost half as large as himself. For a while he ran parallel to the open, husbanding his strength for greater need, then took a course up the knob side directly opposite the way he had come and away from his lair. He heard the dog-pack after him; he heard them change their course at the timber line, and he knew that they were not to be lost by any simple ruse. The enmity of years was in their hearts, and their teeth were whetted for his death. And they were drawing nearer every moment, for they were fleet of foot and had nothing to hold them back. The dead weight in his viselike teeth dragged at his neck, and the King thought. He must leave his prize if he would escape, for they were running two yards to his one. He stopped for the shortest instant by the side of a fallen tree, thrust his muzzle into the torn neck of his kill and drank of the blood; then, relieved of his load, he sped up the hill with long, quick bounds. His enemies were pressing him hard. He could hear them crashing through the twigs and bushes, and their short, sharp cries told him that they were straining every muscle to overtake him. No matter, they had done it before, and he was ahead of them now and still King of the Northern Slope. Nearer and nearer the top of the knob they came, and the cat redoubled his efforts, for a cunning scheme had crept into his subtle brain. He reached the crest twenty yards in advance of the closest hound, dashed across a small plateau terminating in a cliff, then swerved to the left, and was lost to sight as the pack came panting on his heels with their noses close to earth. The lead hound went sheer over the cliff with a howl of dismay; the one immediately behind him braced his fore-legs and ploughed two furrows in the leafy loam, stopping with his dripping tongue hanging over the chasm. In the momentary confusion which followed, the hunted gained twenty more yards, then the chase swept on again hotter than before. Along the crest of the range the King led them, his eyes glowing like twin headlights, and his muscles playing free and strong under his loose skin.

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"The lead hound went sheer over the cliff with a howl of dismay."

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But his strength was leaving him. The long winter fasts, together with the weight which he had carried that night for the first mile of his flight, combined to weaken that tenacious strength which was his birthright. His blood enemies were fresh from sleep and strong from food, and their tireless limbs were gradually overtaking him. He did not know how desperately near they were till the sharp clicking of teeth at his hind-quarters told him that the chase was nearly done. There was one alternative now—the last, and he took it. Before him rose a large oak tree. Gathering his spent energies, he leaped upon it, ran halfway up the trunk, then crouched on a limb, with the breath rasping in his throat and a dreadful aching in his strained lungs.

It had been a long, hard race, and he was only half a victor. For beneath him was the pack, gnawing at the bark in blind frenzy, or patrolling the trees with lugubrious howls expressive of baffled hate. Throughout the long hours of the spring night they remained thus—the King a prisoner in his tower, his captors keeping sleepless guard below. All knew what the end would be. Especially did the silent figure in the tree think on what the dawn would bring. There was no escape, but there were two deaths—the one fighting, the other to be shot down like a skulking fox or a cringing opossum. But life was sweet to the big wild-cat, and as the slow dawn broke it seemed that the balsam of the forest had never come so sweet to his nostrils, and he could feel the old-time vigour coursing through his rested limbs. He placed his bullet head on his paws and looked down.

"Sent forth one last awful cry."

Through the misty vapour of early morning he could see them, ten in number. They had been quiet towards morning, but none of them had slept. Now one lifted up his head and sent forth his battle-call of victory. Others joined in, and just as the sun was beginning to peep over the edge of the world, the answer came—a fox-horn sounded not far away. The men-people were coming, and there were two deaths. There was no need to wait.

Swiftly he raised himself and walked along the limb for a few inches. Then he lifted his back into an arch and sent forth one last awful cry, which echoed far and wide, causing the hate-eager hounds to involuntarily draw back in their tracks, and sending a shiver of fear to their hearts. Then he launched his body in mid-air, straight at the leader of the dog-pack. The wily hound drew back, and the wild-cat struck the earth. They were on him before he could lift his paws from the shock of the fall. Yet he shook them off bravely and gave blow for blow, and in a second the curving white claws were dripping red drops. The pack leader held off for a time, for he was old in war. But when the right moment came he rushed in for the throat-hold—and got it. Then there was a confused medley of legs, tails, teeth, claws, hair, and blood, all in a writhing heap. When order was evolved from this chaos, two hounds were dead, two limped on three legs, another had but one ear, and not one of the pack had a whole skin. And in their midst was a shapeless, lifeless ball of mottled brown.

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TOMMY & CO.

By JEROME K. JEROME.*

No. V.—"GOOD HUMOUR" OBTAINS THE MARBLE SOAP ADVERTISEMENT.

PEOPLE said of the new journal *Good Humour*—people of taste and judgment—that it was the brightest, the cleverest, the most literary penny weekly that ever had been offered to the public. This made Peter Hope, editor and part-proprietor, very happy. William Clodd, business manager, and also part-proprietor, it left less elated.

"Must be careful," said William Clodd, "that we don't make it too clever. Happy medium, that's the ideal."

People said—people of taste and judgment—that *Good Humour* was more worthy of support than all the other penny weeklies put together. People of taste and judgment even went so far, some of them, as to buy it. Peter Hope, looking forward, saw fame and fortune coming to him. William Clodd, looking round about him, said—

"Doesn't it occur to you, Guv'nor, that we're getting this thing just a trifle too high class?"

"What makes you think that?" demanded Peter Hope.

"Our circulation, for one thing," explained Clodd. "The returns for last month——"

"I'd rather you didn't mention them, if you don't mind," interrupted Peter Hope; "somehow, hearing the actual figures always depresses me."

"Can't say I feel inspired by them myself," admitted Clodd.

"It will come," said Peter Hope, "it will come in time. We must educate the public up to our level."

"If there is one thing, so far as I have noticed," said William Clodd, "that the public are inclined to pay less for than another, it is for being educated."

"What are we to do?" asked Peter Hope.

"What you want," answered William Clodd, "is an office-boy."

"How will our having an office-boy increase our circulation?" demanded Peter Hope. "Besides, it was agreed that we could do without one for the first year. Why suggest more expense?"

"I don't mean an ordinary office-boy," explained Clodd. "I mean the sort of boy that I rode with in the train going down to Stratford yesterday."

"What was there remarkable about him?"

"Nothing. He was reading the current number of a penny paper of fiction. Over two hundred thousand people buy it. He is one of them. He told me so. When he had done with it, he drew from his pocket a copy of the *Halfpenny Joker*—they guarantee a circulation of seventy thousand. He sat and chuckled over it until we got to Bow."

"But——"

"You wait a minute. I'm coming to the explanation. That boy represents the reading public. I talked to him. The papers he likes the best are the papers that have the largest sales. He never made a single mistake. The others—those of them he had seen—he dismissed as 'rot.' What he likes is what the great mass of the journal-buying public likes. Please him—I took his name and address, and he is willing to come to us for eight shillings a week—and you please the people that buy. Not the people that glance through a paper when it's lying on the smoking-room table, and tell you it's remarkably good, but the people that plank down their penny. That's the sort we want."

Peter Hope, able editor, with ideals, was shocked—indignant. William Clodd, business man, without ideals, talked figures.

"There's the advertiser to be thought of," persisted Clodd. "I don't pretend to be a George Washington, but what's the use of telling lies that sound like lies, even to oneself while one's telling them? Give me a genuine sale of twenty thousand, and I'll undertake, without committing myself, to convey an impression of forty. But when the actual figures are under eight thousand—well, it hampers you, if you happen to have a conscience.

"Give them every week a dozen columns

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of good, sound literature," continued Clodd insinuatingly, "but wrap it up in twenty-four columns of jam. It's the only way they'll take it, and you will be doing them good—educating them without their knowing it. All powder and no jam! Well, they don't open their mouths, that's all."

Clodd was a man who knew how to get his way. Flipp—spelled Philip—Tweetel arrived in due course of time at 23, Crane Court, ostensibly to take up the position of *Good Humour's* office-boy; in reality, and without his being aware of it, to act as its literary taster. Stories in which Flipp became absorbed were accepted. Peter groaned, but contented himself with correcting only their grosser grammatical blunders; the experiment should be tried in all good faith. Humour at which Flipp laughed was printed. Peter tried to ease his conscience by increasing his subscription to the fund for destitute compositors, but only partially succeeded. Poetry that brought a tear to the eye of Flipp was given leaded type. People of taste and judgment said *Good Humour* had disappointed them. Its circulation, slowly but steadily, increased.

"See!" cried the delighted Clodd; "told you so!"

"It's sad to think——" began Peter.

"Always is," interrupted Clodd cheerfully. "Moral—don't think too much.

"Tell you what we'll do," added Clodd. "We'll make a fortune out of this paper. Then when we can afford to lose a little money, we'll launch a paper that shall appeal only to the intellectual portion of the public. Meanwhile——"

A squat black bottle with a label attached, standing on the desk, arrested Clodd's attention.

"When did this come?" asked Clodd.

"About an hour ago," Peter told him.

"Any order with it?"

"I think so," Peter searched for and found a letter addressed to "William Clodd, Esq., Advertising Manager, *Good Humour*." Clodd tore it open, hastily devoured it.

"Not closed up yet, are you?"

"No, not till eight o'clock."

"Good! I want you to write me a par. Do it now, then you won't forget it. For the 'Walnuts and Wine' column."

Peter sat down, headed a sheet of paper: 'For W. and W. Col.'

"What is it?" questioned Peter—"something to drink?"

"It's a sort of port," explained Clodd, "that doesn't get into your head."

"You consider that an advantage?" queried Peter.

"Of course. You can drink more of it."

Peter continued to write: 'Possesses all the qualities of an old vintage port, without those deleterious properties——' "I haven't tasted it, Clodd," hinted Peter.

"That's all right—I have."

"And was it good?"

"Splendid stuff. Say it's 'delicious and invigorating.' They'll be sure to quote that."

Peter wrote on: 'Personally I have found it delicious and——' Peter left off writing. "I really think, Clodd, I ought to taste it. You see, I am personally recommending it."

"Finish that par. Let me have it to take round to the printers. Then put the bottle in your pocket. Take it home and make a night of it."

Clodd appeared to be in a mighty hurry. Now, this made Peter only the more suspicious. The bottle was close to his hand. Clodd tried to intercept him, but was not quick enough.

"You're not used to temperance drinks," urged Clodd. "Your palate is not accustomed to them."

"I can tell whether it's 'delicious' or not, surely?" pleaded Peter, who had pulled out the cork.

"It's a quarter-page advertisement for thirteen weeks. Put it down and don't be a fool!" urged Clodd.

"I'm going to put it down," laughed Peter, who was fond of his joke. Peter poured out half a tumblerful and drank some of it.

"Like it?" demanded Clodd, with a savage grin.

"You are sure—you are sure it was the right bottle?" gasped Peter.

"Bottle's all right," Clodd assured him. "Try some more. Judge it fairly."

Peter ventured on another sip. "You don't think they would be satisfied if I recommended it as a medicine?" insinuated Peter—"something to have about the house in case of accidental poisoning?"

"Better go round and suggest the idea to them yourself. I've done with it." Clodd took up his hat.

"I'm sorry—I'm very sorry," sighed Peter. "But I couldn't conscientiously——"

Clodd put down his hat again with a bang. "Oh! confound that conscience of yours! Don't it ever think of your creditors? What's the use of my working out my lungs for you, when all you do is to hamper me at every step?"

"Wouldn't it be better policy," urged Peter,

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"to go for the better class of advertiser, who doesn't ask you for this sort of thing?"

"Go for him!" snorted Clodd. "Do you think I don't go for him? They are just sheep. Get one, you get the lot. Until you've got the one, the others won't listen to you."

"That's true," mused Peter. "I spoke to Wilkinson, of Kingsley's, myself. He advised me to try and get Landor's. He thought that if I could get an advertisement

"He was reading the current number of a penny paper of fiction."

out of Landor, he might persuade his people to give us theirs."

"And if you had gone to Landor, he would have promised you theirs provided you got Kingsley's."

"They will come," thought hopeful Peter. "We are going up steadily. They will come with a rush."

"They had better come soon," thought Clodd. "The only things coming with a rush just now are bills."

"Those articles of young McTear's attracted a good deal of attention," expounded Peter. "He has promised to write me another series."

"Jowett is the one to get hold of," mused Clodd. "Jowett. All the others follow like a flock of geese waddling after the old gander. If only we could get hold of Jowett, the rest would be easy."

Jowett was the proprietor of the famous Marble Soap. Jowett spent on advertising every year a quarter of a million, it was said. Jowett was the stay and prop of periodical literature. New papers that secured the Marble Soap advertisement lived and prospered; the new paper to which it was denied languished and died. Jowett, and how to get hold of him; Jowett, and how to get round him, formed the chief topic of discussion at the council-board of most new papers, *Good Humour* amongst the number.

"I have heard," said Miss Ramsbotham, who wrote the "Letter to Clorinda" that filled each week the last two pages of *Good Humour*, and that told Clorinda, who lived secluded in the country, the daily history of the highest class society, among whom Miss Ramsbotham appeared to live and have her being; who they were, and what they wore, the wise and otherwise things they did—"I have heard," said Miss Ramsbotham, "that the old man is susceptible to female influence."

"What I have always thought," said Clodd. "A lady advertising-agent might do well. At all events, they couldn't kick her out."

"They might in the end," thought Peter. "Female door-porters would become a profession for muscular ladies if ever the idea took root."

"The first one would get a good start, anyhow," thought Clodd.

The sub-editor had pricked up her ears. Once upon a time, long ago, the sub-editor had succeeded, when all other London journalists had failed, in securing an interview with a certain great statesman. The sub-editor had never forgotten this—nor allowed anyone else to forget it.

"I believe I could get it for you," said the sub-editor.

The editor and the business-manager both spoke together. They spoke with decision and with emphasis.

"Why not?" said the sub-editor. "When nobody else could get at him, it was I who interviewed Prince——"

"We've heard all about that," interrupted the business-manager. "If I had been your father at the time, you would never have done it."

"How could I have stopped her?" retorted Peter Hope. "She never said a word to me."

"You could have kept an eye on her."

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"Kept an eye on her! When you get a girl of your own, you'll know more about them."

"When I do," asserted Clodd, "I'll manage her."

"We know all about bachelor's children," sneered Peter Hope the editor.

"You leave it to me. I'll have it for you before the end of the week," crowed the sub-editor.

"If you do get it," returned Clodd, "I shall throw it out, that's all."

"You said yourself a lady advertising-agent would be a good idea," the sub-editor reminded him.

"So she might be," returned Clodd; "but she isn't going to be you."

"Why not?"

"Because she isn't, that's why."

"But if——"

"See you at the printer's at twelve," said Clodd to Peter, and went out suddenly.

"Well, I think he's an idiot," said the sub-editor.

"I do not often," said the editor, "but on this point I agree with him. Cadging for advertisements isn't a woman's work."

"But what is the difference between——"

"All the difference in the world," thought the editor.

"You don't know what I was going to say," returned his sub.

"I know the drift of it," asserted the editor.

"But you let me——"

"I know I do—a good deal too much. I'm going to turn over a new leaf."

"All I propose to do——"

"Whatever it is, you're not going to do it," declared the chief. "Shall be back at half-past twelve, if anybody comes."

"It seems to me——" But Peter was gone.

"Just like them all," wailed the sub-editor. "They can't argue; when you explain things to them, they go out. It does make me so mad!"

Miss Ramsbotham laughed. "You are a downtrodden little girl, Tommy."

"As if I couldn't take care of myself!" Tommy's chin was high up in the air.

"Cheer up," suggested Miss Ramsbotham. "Nobody ever tells me not to do anything. I would change with you if I could."

"I'd have walked into that office and have had that advertisement out of old Jowett in five minutes, I know I would," bragged Tommy. "I can always get on with old men."

"Only with the old ones?" queried Miss Ramsbotham.

The door opened. "Anybody in?" asked the face of Johnny Bulstrode, appearing in the jar.

"Can't you see they are?" snapped Tommy.

"Figure of speech," explained Johnny Bulstrode, commonly called "the Babe," entering and closing the door behind him.

"What do you want?" demanded the sub-editor.

"Nothing in particular," replied the Babe.

"Wrong time of the day to come for it, half-past eleven in the morning," explained the sub-editor.

"What's the matter with you?" asked the Babe.

"Feeling very cross," confessed the sub-editor.

The childlike face of the Babe expressed sympathetic inquiry.

"We are very indignant," explained Miss Ramsbotham, "because we are not allowed to rush off to Cannon Street and coax an advertisement out of old Jowett, the soap man. We feel sure that if we only put on our best hat, he couldn't possibly refuse us."

"No coaxing required," thought the sub-editor. "Once get in to see the old fellow and put the actual figures before him, he would clamour to come in."

"Won't he see Clodd?" asked the Babe.

"Won't see anybody on behalf of anything new just at present, apparently," answered Miss Ramsbotham. "It was my fault. I was foolish enough to repeat that I had heard he was susceptible to female charm. They say it was Mrs. Sarkitt that got the advertisement for a certain paper out of him. But, of course, it may not be true."

"Wish I was a soap man and had got advertisements to give away," sighed the Babe.

"Wish you were," agreed the sub-editor.

"You should have them all, Tommy."

"My name," corrected him the sub-editor, "is Miss Hope."

"I beg your pardon," said the Babe. "I don't know how it is, but one gets into the way of calling you Tommy."

"I will thank you," said the sub-editor, "to get out of it."

"I am sorry," said the Babe.

"Don't let it occur again," said the sub-editor.

The Babe stood first on one leg and then on the other, but nothing seemed to come of it. "Well," said the Babe, "I just

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looked in, that's all. Nothing I can do for you?"

"Nothing," thanked him the sub-editor.

"Good morning," said the Babe.

"Good morning," said the sub-editor.

The childlike face of the Babe wore a chastened expression as it slowly descended the stairs. Most of the members of the Autolycus Club looked in about once a day to see if they could do anything for Tommy. Some of them had luck. Only the day before, Porson—a heavy, most uninteresting man—had been sent down all the way to Plaistow to inquire after the wounded hand of a machine-boy. Young Alexander, whose poetry some people could not even understand, had been commissioned to search London for a second-hand edition of Maitland's "Architecture." Since a fortnight nearly now, when he had been sent out to drive away an organ that would not go, Johnny had been given nothing.

Johnny turned the corner into Fleet Street feeling bitter with his lot. A boy carrying a parcel stumbled against him.

"Beg yer pardon——" the small boy looked up into Johnny's face, "miss," added the small boy, dodging the blow and disappearing into the crowd.

The Babe, by reason of his childlike face, was accustomed to insults of this character, but to-day it especially irritated him. Why at twenty-two could he not grow even a moustache? Why was he only five feet seven and a half? Why had Fate cursed him with a pink-and-white complexion, so that the members of his own club had nicknamed him "the Babe," while street-boys as they passed pleaded with him for a kiss? Why was his very voice, a flutelike alto, more suitable—— Suddenly an idea sprang to life within his brain. The idea grew. Passing a barber's shop, Johnny went in.

"'You are sure—you are sure it was the right bottle?'"

"'Air cut, sir?" remarked the barber, fitting a sheet round Johnny's neck.

"No, shave," corrected Johnny.

"Beg pardon," said the barber, substituting a towel for the sheet. "Do you shave up, sir?" later demanded the barber.

"Yes," answered Johnny.

"Pleasant weather we are having," said the barber.

"Very," assented Johnny.

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From the barber's, Johnny went to Stinchcombe's, the costumiers, in Drury Lane.

"I am playing in a burlesque," explained the Babe. "I want you to rig me out completely as a modern girl."

"Peeth o' luck!" said the shopman. "Goth th' very bundle for you. Juth come in."

"I shall want everything," explained the Babe, "from the boots to the hat; stays, petticoats—the whole bag of tricks."

"Regular trouthean there," said the shopman, emptying out the canvas bag upon the counter. "Thry 'em on."

The Babe contented himself with trying on the costume and the boots.

"Juth made for you!" said the shopman.

"A little loose about the chest," suggested the Babe.

"Thath's all right," said the shopman. "Couple o' sthmall towelths all thath's wanted."

"You don't think it too showy?" queried the Babe.

"Thowy? Sthylish, thath's all."

"You are sure everything's here?"

"Everythinkth there. 'Thept the bit o' meat inthide," assured him the shopman.

The Babe left a deposit and gave his name and address. The shopman promised the things should be sent round within an hour. The Babe, who had entered into the spirit of the thing, bought a pair of gloves and a small reticule, and made his way to Bow Street.

"I want a woman's light brown wig," said the Babe to Mr. Cox, the perruquier.

Mr. Cox tried on two. The deceptive appearance of the second, Mr. Cox pronounced as perfect.

"Looks more natural on you than your own hair, blessed if it doesn't!" said Mr. Cox.

The wig also was promised within the hour. The spirit of completeness descended upon the Babe. On his way back to his lodgings in Great Queen Street, he purchased a ladylike umbrella and a veil.

Now, a quarter of an hour after Johnny Bulstrode had made his exit by the door of Mr. Stinchcombe's shop, one, Harry Bennett, actor and member of the Autolycus Club, pushed it open and entered. The shop was empty. Harry Bennett hammered with his stick and waited. A piled-up bundle of clothes lay upon the counter; a sheet of paper, with a name and address scrawled across it, rested on the bundle. Harry Bennett, given to idle curiosity, approached and read the same. Harry Bennett, with his stick, poked the bundle, scattering its items over the counter.

"Donth do thath!" said the shopman, coming up. "Juth been putting 'em together."

"What the deuce," said Harry Bennett, "is Johnny Bulstrode going to do with that rig-out?"

"How thud I know?" answered the shopman. "Private theathricals, I suppoth. Friend o' yourth?"

"Yes," replied Harry Bennett. "By Jove! he ought to make a good girl. Should like to see it!"

"Well, arthk him for a ticket. Donth make 'em dirty," suggested the shopman.

"I must," said Harry Bennett, and talked about his own affairs.

The rig-out and the wig did not arrive at Johnny's lodgings within the hour as promised, but arrived there within three hours, which was as much as Johnny had expected. It took Johnny nearly an hour to dress, but at last he stood before the plate-glass panel of the wardrobe, transformed. Johnny had reason to be pleased with the result. A tall, handsome girl looked back at him out of the glass—a little showily dressed, perhaps, but decidedly *chic*.

"Wonder if I ought to have a cloak," mused Johnny, as a ray of sunshine, streaming through the window, fell upon the image in the glass. "Well, anyhow, I haven't," thought Johnny, as the sunlight died away again, "so it's no good thinking about it."

Johnny seized his reticule and his umbrella and opened cautiously the door. Outside all was silent. Johnny stealthily descended; in the passage paused again. Voices sounded from the basement. Feeling like an escaped burglar, Johnny slipped the latch of the big door and peeped out. A policeman, passing, turned and looked at him. Johnny hastily drew back and closed the door again. Somebody was ascending from the kitchen. Johnny, caught between two terrors, nearer to the front door than to the stairs, having no time to think, chose the street. It seemed to Johnny that the street was making for him. A woman came hurriedly towards him. What was she going to say to him? What should he answer her? To his surprise she passed him, hardly noticing him. Wondering what miracle had saved him, he took a few steps forward. A couple of young clerks coming up from behind turned to look at him, but on encountering his answering stare of angry alarm, appeared

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confused and went their way. It began to dawn upon him that mankind was less discerning than he had feared. Gaining courage as he proceeded, he reached Holborn. Here the larger crowd swept around him indifferent.

"I beg your pardon," said Johnny, coming into collision with a stout gentleman.

"My fault," replied the stout gentleman, as, smiling, he picked up his damaged hat.

"I beg your pardon," repeated Johnny again two minutes later, colliding with a tall young lady.

"Should advise you to take something for that squint of yours," remarked the tall young lady with severity.

"What's the matter with me?" thought Johnny. "Seems to be a sort of mist——" The explanation flashed across him. "Of course," said Johnny to himself, it's this confounded veil!"

Johnny decided to walk to the Marble Soap offices. "I'll be more used to the hang of things by the time I get there if I walk," thought Johnny. "Hope the old beggar's in."

In Newgate Street, Johnny paused and pressed his hands against his chest. "Funny sort of pain I've got," thought Johnny. "Wonder if I should shock them if I went in for a drop of brandy?

"It don't get any better——" reflected Johnny with some alarm, on reaching the corner of Cheapside. "Hope I'm not going to be ill. Whatever——" The explanation came to him. "Of course, it's these stays! No wonder girls are short-tempered at times."

At the offices of the Marble Soap, Johnny was treated with marked courtesy. Mr. Jowett was out, was not expected back till five o'clock. Would the lady wait, or would she call again? The lady decided, now she was there, to wait. Would the lady take the easy-chair? Would the lady have the window open or would she have it shut? Had the lady seen the *Times?*

"Or the *Ha'penny Joker?*" suggested a junior clerk, who was promptly sent back to his work.

Many of the senior clerks had occasion to pass through the waiting-room. Two of the senior clerks held views about the weather which they appeared wishful to express at length. Johnny began to enjoy himself. This thing was going to be good fun. By the time the slamming of doors and the hurrying of feet announced the advent of the chief, Johnny was looking forward to his interview.

It was briefer and less satisfactory than he had anticipated. Mr. Jowett was very busy—did not as a rule see anybody in the afternoon; but of course, a lady—— Would Miss——

"Montgomery."

"Would Miss Montgomery inform Mr. Jowett what it was he might have the pleasure of doing for her?

Miss Montgomery explained.

Mr. Jowett seemed half angry, half amused.

"Really," said Mr. Jowett, "this is hardly playing the game. Against our fellow-men we can protect ourselves, but if the ladies are going to attack us—really, it isn't fair."

Miss Montgomery pleaded.

"I'll think it over," was all that Mr. Jowett could be made to promise. "Look me up again."

"When?" asked Miss Montgomery.

"What's to-day?—Thursday. Say Monday." Mr. Jowett rang the bell. "Take my advice," said the old gentleman, laying a fatherly hand on Johnny's shoulder, "leave business to us men. You are a handsome girl. You can do better for yourself than this."

A clerk entered, Johnny rose. "On Monday next, then," Johnny reminded him.

"At four o'clock," agreed Mr. Jowett. "Good afternoon."

Johnny went out feeling disappointed, and yet, as he told himself, he hadn't done so badly. Anyhow, there was nothing for it but to wait till Monday. Now he would go home, change his clothes, and get some dinner. He hailed a hansom.

"Number twenty-eight—no. Stop at the Queen's Street corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields," Johnny directed the man.

"Quite right, miss," commented the cabman pleasantly. "Corner's best—saves all talk."

"What do you mean?" demanded Johnny.

"No offence, miss," answered the man. "We was all young once."

Johnny climbed in. At the corner of Queen Street and Lincoln's Inn Fields, Johnny got out. Johnny, who had been pondering other matters, put his hand instinctively to where, speaking generally, his pocket should have been; then recollected himself.

"Let me see, did I think to bring any money out with me, or did I not?" mused Johnny, as he stood upon the kerb.

"Look in the ridicule, miss," suggested the cabman.

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Johnny looked. It was empty.

"Perhaps I put it in my pocket," thought Johnny.

The cabman hitched his reins to the whip-socket and leant back.

"It's somewhere about here, I know—I saw it," Johnny told himself. "Sorry to keep you waiting," Johnny added aloud to the cabman.

"Don't you worry about that, miss," replied the cabman civilly; "we are used to it. A shilling a quarter of an hour is what we charge."

"Of all the silly tricks!" muttered Johnny to himself.

Two small boys and a girl carrying a baby paused, interested.

"Go away," told them the cabman. "You'll have troubles of your own one day."

The urchins moved a few steps further, then halted again and were joined by a slatternly woman and another boy.

"Got it!" cried Johnny, unable to suppress his delight as his hand slipped through a fold. The lady with the baby, without precisely knowing why, set up a shrill cheer. Johnny's delight died away; it wasn't the pocket-hole. Short of taking the skirt off and turning it inside out, it didn't seem to Johnny that he ever would find that pocket.

Then in that moment of despair he came across it accidentally. It was as empty as the reticule.

"I am sorry," said Johnny to the cabman, "but I appear to have come out without my purse."

The cabman said he had heard that tale before, and was making preparations to descend. The crowd, now numbering eleven, looked hopeful. It occurred to Johnny later that he might have offered his umbrella to the cabman; at least it would have fetched the eighteenpence. One thinks of these things afterwards. The only idea that occurred to him at the moment was that of getting home.

"'Ere, 'old my 'orse a minute, one of yer," shouted the cabman.

Half-a-dozen willing hands seized the dozing steed and roused it into madness.

"Hi! stop 'er!" roared the cabman.

"She's down!" shouted the excited crowd.

"Tripped over 'er skirt," explained the slatternly woman. "They do 'amper you."

"No, she's not. She's up again!" vociferated a delighted plumber, with a sounding slap on his own leg. "Blimy, if she ain't a good 'un!"

Fortunately the Square was tolerably clear and Johnny a good runner. Holding now his skirt and petticoat high in both hands, Johnny moved across the square at the rate of fifteen miles an hour. A butcher's boy sprang in front of him with arms held out to stop him. The thing that for the next three months annoyed that butcher-boy most was hearing shouted out after him: "Yah! who was knocked down and run over by a lidy?" By the time Johnny reached the Strand, *viâ* Clement's Inn, the hue and cry was far behind. Johnny dropped his skirts and assumed a more girlish pace. Through Bow Street and Long Acre he reached Great Queen Street in safety. Upon his own doorstep he began to laugh. His afternoon's experience had been amusing; still, on the whole, he wasn't sorry it was over. One can have too much even of the best of jokes. Johnny rang the bell.

The door opened. Johnny would have walked in had not a big, raw-boned woman barred his progress.

"What do you want?" demanded the raw-boned woman.

"Want to come in," explained Johnny.

"What do you want to come in for?"

This appeared to Johnny a foolish question. On reflection he saw the sense of it. This raw-boned woman was not Mrs. Pegg, his landlady. Some friend of hers, he supposed.

"It's all right," said Johnny, "I live here. Left my latchkey at home, that's all."

"There's no females lodging here," declared the raw-boned lady. "And what's more, there's going to be none."

All this was very vexing. Johnny in his joy at reaching his own doorstep had not foreseen these complications. Now it would be necessary to explain things. He only hoped the story would not get round to the fellows at the Club.

"Ask Mrs. Pegg to step up for a minute," requested Johnny.

"Not at 'ome," explained the raw-boned lady.

"Not—not at home?"

"Gone to Romford, if you wish to know, to see her mother."

"Gone to Romford?"

"I said Romford, didn't I?" retorted the raw-boned lady tartly.

"What—what time do you expect her in?"

"Sunday evening, six o'clock," replied the raw-boned lady.

Johnny looked at the raw-boned lady, imagined himself telling the raw-boned lady the simple, unvarnished truth, and the raw-

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"Johnny moved across the square at the rate of fifteen miles an hour."

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boned lady's utter disbelief of every word of it. An inspiration came to his aid.

"I am Mr. Bulstrode's sister," said Johnny meekly; "he's expecting me."

"Thought you said you lived here?" reminded him the raw-boned lady.

"I meant that he lived here," replied poor Johnny still more meekly. "He has the second floor, you know."

"I know," replied the raw-boned lady. "Not in just at present."

"Not in?"

"Went out at three o'clock."

"I'll go up to his room and wait for him," said Johnny.

"No, you won't," said the raw-boned lady.

For an instant it occurred to Johnny to make a dash for it, but the raw-boned lady looked both formidable and determined. There would be a big disturbance—perhaps the police called in. Johnny had often wanted to see his name in print; in connection with this affair he somehow felt he didn't.

"Do let me in," Johnny pleaded; "I have nowhere else to go."

"You have a walk and cool yourself," suggested the raw-boned lady. "Don't expect he will be long."

"But, you see——"

The raw-boned lady slammed the door.

Outside a restaurant in Wellington Street, from which proceeded savoury odours, Johnny paused and tried to think.

"Whatever did I do with that umbrella? I had it—no, I didn't. Must have dropped it, I suppose, when that silly ass tried to stop me. By Jove! I am having luck!"

Outside another restaurant in the Strand Johnny paused again. "How am I to live till Sunday night? Where am I to sleep? If I telegraph home—hang it! how can I telegraph? I haven't got a penny. This is funny," said Johnny, unconsciously speaking aloud; "upon my word, this is funny! Oh! you go to——" Johnny hurled this last at the head of an overgrown errand-boy whose intention had been to offer sympathy.

"Well, I never!" commented a passing flower-girl. "Calls 'erself a lidy, I suppose."

"Nowadays," observed the stud and button merchant at the corner of Exeter Street, "they make 'em out of anything."

Drawn by a notion that was forming in his mind, Johnny turned his steps up Bedford Street. "Why not?" mused Johnny. "Nobody else seems even to have a suspicion. Why should they? I'll never hear the last of it if they find me out. But why should they find me out? Well, something's got to be done."

Johnny walked on quickly. At the door of the Autolycus Club he was undecided for a moment, then took his courage in both hands and plunged through the swing-doors.

"Is Mr. Herring—Mr. Jack Herring—here?"

"Find him in the smoking-room, Mr. Bulstrode," answered old Goslin, who was reading the evening paper.

"Oh, would you mind asking him to step out a moment?"

Old Goslin looked up, took off his spectacles, rubbed them, put them on again.

"Please say Miss Bulstrode—Mr. Bulstrode's sister."

Old Goslin found Jack Herring the centre of an earnest argument on Hamlet—was he really mad?

"A lady to see you, Mr. Herring," announced old Goslin.

"A what?"

"Miss Bulstrode—Mr. Bulstrode's sister. She's waiting in the hall."

"Never knew he had a sister," said Jack Herring, rising.

"Wait a minute," said Harry Bennett. "Shut that door. Don't go." This to old Goslin, who closed the door and returned. "Lady in a heliotrope dress with a lace collar, three flounces on the skirt?"

"That's right, Mr. Bennett," agreed old Goslin.

"It's the Babe himself!" asserted Harry Bennett.

The question of Hamlet's madness was forgotten.

"Was in at Stinchcombe's this morning," explained Harry Bennett; "saw the clothes on the counter addressed to him. That's the identical frock. This is just a 'try on'—thinks he's going to have a lark with us."

The Autolycus Club looked round at itself.

"I can see verra promising possibilities in this, provided the thing is properly managed," said the Wee Laddie, after a pause.

"So can I," agreed Jack Herring. "Keep where you are, all of you. 'Twould be a pity to fool it."

The Autolycus Club waited. Jack Herring re-entered the room.

"One of the saddest stories I have ever heard in all my life," explained Jack Herring in a whisper. "Poor girl left Derbyshire this morning to come and see her brother: found him out—hasn't been seen at his lodgings since three o'clock; fears some-

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thing may have happened to him. Landlady gone to Romford to see her mother; strange woman in charge, won't let her in to wait for him."

"How sad it is when trouble overtakes the innocent and helpless!" murmured Somerville the Briefless.

"That's not the worst of it," continued Jack. "The dear girl has been robbed of everything she possesses, even of her umbrella, and hasn't got a *sou*; hasn't had any dinner, and doesn't know where to sleep."

"Sounds a bit elaborate," thought Porson.

"I think I can understand it," said the Briefless one. "What has happened is this. He's dressed up thinking to have a bit of fun with us, and has come out, forgetting to put any money or his latchkey in his pocket. His landlady may have gone to Romford or may not. In any case, he would have to knock at the door and enter into explanations. What does he suggest—the loan of a sovereign?"

"The loan of two," replied Jack Herring.

"To buy himself a suit of clothes. Don't you do it, Jack. Providence has imposed this upon us. Our duty is to show him the folly of indulging in senseless escapades."

"I think we might give him a dinner," thought the stout and sympathetic Porson.

"What I propose to do," grinned Jack, "is to take him round to Mrs. Postwhistle's. She's under a sort of obligation to me. I am trying to get her the post-office. We'll leave him there for a night, with instructions to Mrs. P. to keep a motherly eye on him. To-morrow he shall have his 'bit of fun,' and I guess he'll be the first to get tired of the joke."

It looked a promising plot. Seven members of the Autolycus Club gallantly undertook to accompany "Miss Bulstrode" to her lodgings. Jack Herring excited jealousy by securing the privilege of carrying her reticule. "Miss Bulstrode" was given to understand that anything any of the seven could do for her, each and every would be delighted to do, if only for the sake of her brother, one of the dearest boys that ever breathed—a bit of an ass, though that, of course, he could not help. "Miss Bulstrode" was not as grateful as perhaps she should have been. Her idea still was that if one of them would lend her a couple of sovereigns, the rest need not worry themselves further. This, purely in her own interests, they declined to do. She had suffered one extensive robbery that day already, as Jack reminded her. London was a city of danger to the young and inexperienced. Far better that they should watch over her and provide for her simple wants. Painful as it was to refuse a lady, a beloved companion's sister's welfare was yet dearer to them. "Miss Bulstrode's" only desire was not to waste their time. Jack Herring's opinion was that there existed no true Englishman who would grudge time spent upon succouring a beautiful maiden in distress.

Arrived at the little grocer's shop in Rolls Court, Jack Herring drew Mrs. Postwhistle aside.

"She's the sister of a very dear friend of ours," explained Jack Herring.

"A fine-looking girl," commented Mrs. Postwhistle.

"I shall be round again in the morning. Don't let her out of your sight, and, above all, don't lend her any money," directed Jack Herring.

"I understand," replied Mrs. Postwhistle.

"Miss Bulstrode" having despatched an excellent supper of cold mutton and bottled beer, leant back in her chair and crossed her legs. "I have often wondered," remarked "Miss Bulstrode," her eyes fixed upon the ceiling, "what a cigarette would taste like."

"Taste nasty, I should say, the first time," thought Mrs. Postwhistle, who was knitting.

"Some girls, so I have heard," remarked "Miss Bulstrode," "smoke cigarettes."

"Not nice girls," thought Mrs. Postwhistle.

"One of the nicest girls I ever knew," remarked "Miss Bulstrode," "always smoked a cigarette after supper. Said it soothed her nerves."

"Wouldn't have thought so if I'd had charge of her," said Mrs. Postwhistle.

"I think," said "Miss Bulstrode," who seemed restless, "I think I shall go for a little walk before turning in."

"Perhaps it would do us good," agreed Mrs. Postwhistle, laying down her knitting.

"Don't you trouble to come," urged the thoughtful "Miss Bulstrode." "You look tired."

"Not at all," replied Mrs. Postwhistle. "Feel I should like it."

In some respects Mrs. Postwhistle proved an admirable companion. She asked no questions, and only spoke when spoken to, which, during that walk, was not often. At the end of half an hour, "Miss Bulstrode" pleaded a headache and thought she would return home and go to bed. Mrs. Postwhistle thought it a reasonable idea.

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"Well, it's better than tramping the streets," muttered Johnny, as the bedroom door was closed behind him, "and that's all one can say for it. Must get hold of a smoke to-morrow, if I have to rob the till. What's that?" Johnny stole across on tiptoe. "Confound it!" said Johnny, "if she hasn't locked the door!"

Johnny sat down upon the bed and took stock of his position. "It doesn't seem to me," thought Johnny, "that I'm ever going to get out of this mess." Johnny, still muttering, unfastened his stays. "Thank Heaven, that's off!" ejaculated Johnny piously, as he watched his form slowly expanding. "Suppose I'll be used to them before I've finished with them."

Johnny had a night of dreams.

For the whole of next day, which was Friday, Johnny remained "Miss Bulstrode," hoping against hope to find an opportunity to escape from his predicament without confession. The entire Autolycus Club appeared to have fallen in love with him.

"Thought I was a bit of a fool myself," mused Johnny, "where a petticoat was concerned. Don't believe these blithering idiots have ever seen a girl before."

They came in ones, they came in little parties, and tendered him devotion. Even Mrs. Postwhistle, accustomed to regard human phenomena without comment, remarked upon it.

"When you are all tired of it," said Mrs. Postwhistle to Jack Herring, "let me know."

"The moment we find her brother," explained Jack Herring, "of course we shall take her to him."

"Nothing like looking in the right place for a thing when you've finished looking in the others," observed Mrs. Postwhistle.

"What do you mean?" demanded Jack.

"Just what I say," answered Mrs. Postwhistle.

Jack Herring looked at Mrs. Postwhistle. But Mrs. Postwhistle's face was not of the expressive order.

"I think it will be all right about the post-office," Jack Herring told her.

"It's very kind of you," said Mrs. Postwhistle.

They brought her presents—nothing very expensive, more as tokens of regard: dainty packets of sweets, nosegays of simple flowers, bottles of scent. To Somerville "Miss Bulstrode" hinted that if he really did desire to please her, and wasn't merely talking through his hat—"Miss Bulstrode" apologised for the slang, which, she feared, she must have picked up from her brother—he might give her a box of Messani's cigarettes, size No. 2. The suggestion pained him. Somerville the Briefless was perhaps old-fashioned. "Miss Bulstrode" cut him short by agreeing that he was, and seemed disinclined for further conversation.

They took her to Madame Tussaud's. They took her up the Monument. They took her to the Tower of London. In the evening they took her to the Polytechnic, to see Pepper's Ghost. They made a merry party wherever they went.

"Seem to be enjoying themselves!" remarked other sightseers, surprised and envious.

"Girl seems to be a bit out of it," remarked others, more observant.

"Sulky-looking bit o' goods, I call her," remarked some of the ladies.

The fortitude with which "Miss Bulstrode" bore the mysterious disappearance of her brother excited admiration.

"Hadn't we better telegraph to your people in Derbyshire?" suggested Jack Herring.

"Don't do it," vehemently protested the thoughtful "Miss Bulstrode"; "it *might* alarm them. The best plan is for you to lend me a couple of sovereigns and let me return home quietly."

"You might be robbed again," feared Jack Herring. "I'll go down with you."

"Perhaps he'll turn up to-morrow," thought "Miss Bulstrode." "Expect he's gone on a visit."

"He ought not to have done it," thought Jack Herring, "knowing you were coming."

"Oh! he's like that," explained "Miss Bulstrode."

"If I had a young and beautiful sister," said Jack Herring.

"Oh! let's talk of something else," suggested "Miss Bulstrode." "You make me tired."

With Jack Herring in particular Johnny was beginning to lose patience. That "Miss Bulstrode's" charms had evidently struck Jack Herring all of a heap, as the saying is, had in the beginning amused Master Johnny. Indeed, as in the seclusion of his bedchamber over the little grocer's shop he told himself with bitter self-reproach, he had undoubtedly encouraged the man From admiration Jack had rapidly passed to infatuation, from infatuation to apparent imbecility. Had Johnny's mind been less intent upon his own troubles, he might have been suspicious. As it was, and after all that had happened, nothing now could astonish Johnny. "Thank Heaven!" murmured Johnny, as he blew out the light, "this Mrs. Postwhistle appears to be a reliable woman."

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"They took her to Madame Tussaud's."

Now, about the same time that Johnny's head was falling thus upon his pillow, the Autolycus Club sat discussing plans for their next day's entertainment.

"I think," said Jack Herring, "the Crystal Palace in the morning, when it's nice and quiet."

"To be followed by Greenwich Hospital in the afternoon," suggested Somerville.

"Winding up with the Moore and Burgess Minstrels in the evening," thought Porson.

"Hardly the place for the young person," feared Jack Herring. "Some of the jokes—"

"Mr. Brandram gives a reading of 'Julius Cæsar' at St. George's Hall," the Wee Laddie informed them for their guidance.

"Hallo!" said Alexander the Poet, entering at the moment. "What are you all talking about?"

"We were discussing where to take Miss Bulstrode to-morrow evening," informed him Jack Herring.

"Miss Bulstrode," repeated the Poet in tone of some surprise. "Do you mean Johnny Bulstrode's sister?"

"That's the lady," answered Jack. "But how do you come to know about her? Thought you were in Yorkshire."

"Came up yesterday," explained the Poet. "Travelled up with her."

"Travelled up with her?"

"From Matlock Bath. What's the matter with you all?" demanded the Poet. "You all of you look——"

"Sit down," said the Briefless one to the Poet. "Let's talk this matter over quietly."

Alexander the Poet, mystified, sat down.

"You say you travelled up to London yesterday with Miss Bulstrode. You are sure it was Miss Bulstrode?"

"Sure!" retorted the Poet. "Why, I've known her ever since she was a baby."

"About what time did you reach London?"

"Three-thirty."

"And what became of her? Where did she say she was going?"

"I never asked her. The last I saw of her she was getting into a cab. I had an appointment myself, and was—I say, what's the matter with Herring?"

Herring had risen and was walking about with his head between his hands.

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"Never mind him. Miss Bulstrode is a lady of about—how old?"

"Eighteen—no, nineteen last birthday."

"A tall, handsome sort of girl?"

"Yes. I say, has anything happened to her?"

"Nothing has happened to her," assured him Somerville. "*She's* all right. Been having rather a good time, on the whole."

The Poet was relieved to hear it.

"I asked her an hour ago," said Jack Herring, who was still holding his head between his hands as if to make sure it was there, "if she thought she could ever learn to love me. Would you say that could be construed into an offer of marriage?"

The remainder of the Club was unanimously of opinion that, practically speaking, it was a proposal.

"I don't see it," argued Jack Herring. "It was merely in the nature of a remark."

The Club was of opinion that such quibbling was unworthy of a gentleman.

It appeared to be a case for prompt action. Jack Herring sat down and then and there began a letter to Miss Bulstrode, care of Mrs. Postwhistle.

"But what I don't understand——" said Alexander the Poet.

"Oh! take him away somewhere and tell him, someone," moaned Jack Herring. "How can I think with all this chatter going on?"

"But why did Bennett——" whispered Porson.

"Where is Bennett?" demanded half-a-dozen fierce voices.

Harry Bennett had not been seen all day.

Jack's letter was delivered to "Miss Bulstrode" the next morning at breakfast-time. Having perused it, "Miss Bulstrode" rose and requested of Mrs. Postwhistle the loan of half-a-crown.

"Mr. Herring's particular instructions were," explained Mrs. Postwhistle, "that, above all things, I was not to lend you any money."

"When you have read that," replied "Miss Bulstrode," handing her the letter, "perhaps you will agree with me that Herring is an ass."

Mrs. Postwhistle read the letter and produced the half-crown.

"Better get a shave with part of it," suggested Mrs. Postwhistle. "That is, if you are going to play the fool much longer."

"Miss Bulstrode" opened his eyes. Mrs. Postwhistle went on with her breakfast.

"Don't tell them," said Johnny; "not just for a little while, at all events."

"'But you look so ridiculous.'"

"Nothing to do with me," replied Mrs. Postwhistle.

Twenty minutes later, the real Miss Bulstrode, on a visit to her aunt in Kensington, was surprised at receiving, enclosed in an envelope, the following hastily scrawled note—

"Want to speak to you at once—*alone*. Don't yell when you see me. It's all right. Can explain in two ticks.—Your loving brother, JOHNNY."

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It took longer than two ticks; but at last the Babe came to an end of it.

"When you have done laughing——" said the Babe.

"But you look so ridiculous," said his sister.

"*They* didn't think so," retorted the Babe. "I took them in all right. Guess you've never had as much attention all in one day."

"Are you sure you took them in?" queried his sister.

"If you will come to the Club at eight o'clock this evening," said the Babe, "I'll prove it to you. Perhaps I'll take you on to a theatre afterwards—if you're good."

The Babe himself walked into the Autolycus Club a few minutes before eight and encountered an atmosphere of restraint.

"Thought you were lost," remarked Somerville coldly.

"Called away suddenly—very important business," explained the Babe. "Awfully much obliged to all you fellows for all you have been doing for my sister. She's just been telling me."

"Don't mention it," said two or three.

"Awfully good of you, I'm sure," persisted the Babe. "Don't know what she would have done without you."

A mere nothing, the Club assured him. The blushing modesty of the Autolycus Club at hearing of their own good deeds was touching. Left to themselves, they would have talked of quite other things. As a matter of fact, they tried to.

"Never heard her speak so enthusiastically of anyone as she does of you, Jack," said the Babe, turning to Jack Herring.

"Of course, you know, dear boy," explained Jack Herring, "anything I could do for a sister of yours——"

"I know, dear boy," replied the Babe; "I always felt it."

"Say no more about it," urged Jack Herring.

"She couldn't quite make out that letter of yours this morning," continued the Babe, ignoring Jack's request. "She's afraid you think her ungrateful."

"It seemed to me, on reflection," explained Jack Herring, "that on one or two little matters she may have misunderstood me. As I wrote her, there are days when I don't seem altogether to quite know what I'm doing."

"Rather awkward," thought the Babe.

"It is," agreed Jack Herring. "Yesterday was one of them."

"She tells me you were most kind to her," the Babe reassured him. "She thought at first it was a little uncivil, your refusing to lend her any money. But as I put it to her——"

"It was silly of me," interrupted Jack. "I see that now. I went round this morning, meaning to make it all right. But she was gone, and Mrs. Postwhistle seemed to think I had better leave things as they were. I blame myself exceedingly."

"My dear boy, don't blame yourself for anything. You acted nobly," the Babe told him. "She's coming here to call for me this evening on purpose to thank you."

"I'd rather not," said Jack Herring.

"Nonsense!" said the Babe.

"You must excuse me," insisted Jack Herring. "I don't mean it rudely, but really I'd rather not see her."

"But here she is," said the Babe, taking at that moment the card from old Goslin's hand. "She will think it so strange."

"I'd really rather not," repeated poor Jack.

"It seems discourteous," suggested Somerville.

"You go," suggested Jack.

"She doesn't want to see me," explained Somerville.

"Yes, she does," corrected him the Babe. "I'd forgotten. She wants to see you both."

"If I go," said Jack, "I shall tell her the plain truth,"

"Do you know," said Somerville, "I'm thinking that will be the shortest way."

Miss Bulstrode was seated in the hall. Jack Herring and Somerville both thought her present quieter style of dress suited her much better.

"Here he is," announced the Babe, in triumph. "Here's Jack Herring and here's Somerville. Do you know, I could hardly persuade them to come out and see you. Dear old Jack, he always was so shy."

Miss Bulstrode rose. She said she could never thank them sufficiently for all their goodness to her. Miss Bulstrode seemed quite overcome. Her voice trembled with emotion.

"Before we go further, Miss Bulstrode," said Jack Herring, "it will be best to tell you that all along we thought you were your brother, dressed up as a girl."

"Oh!" said the Babe, "so that's the explanation, is it? If I had only known——" Then the Babe stopped, and wished he hadn't spoken.

Somerville seized him by the shoulders

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and, with a sudden jerk, stood him beside his sister under the gas-jet.

"You little brute!" said Somerville. "It was you all along!" And the Babe, seeing the game was up, and glad that the joke had not been entirely on one side, confessed.

Jack Herring and Somerville the Briefless went that night with Johnny and his sister to the theatre—and on other nights. Miss Bulstrode thought Jack Herring very nice, and told her brother so. But she thought Somerville the Briefless even nicer, and later, under cross-examination, when Somerville was no longer briefless, told Somerville so himself.

But that has nothing to do with this particular story, the end of which is that Miss Bulstrode kept the appointment made for Monday afternoon between "Miss Montgomery" and Mr. Jowett, and secured thereby the Marble Soap advertisement for the back page of *Good Humour* for six months, at twenty-five pounds a week.

RUSTLING LADIES IN THE CORN.

WHEN the frosts go stepping whitely,
And the gardens look forlorn,
And you hear the gunshots cracking,
And the wild-ducks blow their horn,
Then it is that rustling ladies
Walk between the rows of corn.

All the world is mist and broadness,
Trees begin to swim,
As the evening dusk grows deeper,
And the hills float large and dim;
While the moon, like some shut lily,
Blossoms on the mountain's rim,

Then those tall, mysterious ladies,
Rustle through the dark;
Up and down they sweep and swishle,
And they whisper, "Hark!"
And the jewels on their bosom
Flicker with a wandering spark.

There are plumed knights among them,
Flash of mail and shine of spear,
Each one dancing with his dear.
Oh, the ripples of their laughter!
Oh, the ballads that I hear!
But by daytime they have vanished,
Shining skirt and glinting spear,
And the wind among the tassels
Is the only sound I hear.

FLORENCE WILKINSON.

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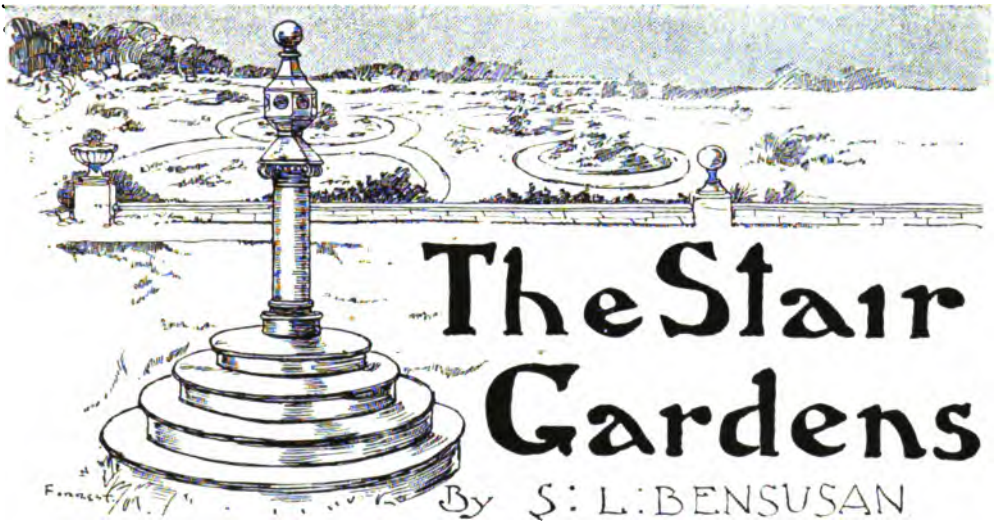

The Stair Gardens

By S. L. BENSUSAN

THE chance traveller alighting from a train at Castle Kennedy station, in Wigtownshire, finds neither village nor indication of activity in any shape or form. He passes a few cottages, in the excellent condition of repair that tells of a wealthy landlord, and past the cottages where the high road runs to right and left finds a gate, with a small lodge by the side. If the day be Wednesday or Saturday, he may open the gate and spend a long day exploring, without let or hindrance, the wonderful grounds of Lochinch Castle, the Wigtownshire seat of the Earls of Stair.

A gravelled path leads down a long drive heavily fringed on either side by trees rising from ground covered with bracken. This was apparently thick woodland at no distant date, and has been brought gradually into its present condition in manner likely to please the landscape gardener and the gamekeeper responsible for the success of the pheasant-shooting. All woodland has qualities that lovers of Nature delight to admire; yet when the art of the forester is called in, the result, all too often, is shown in a certain methodical handling against which Nature revolts. Left to themselves, trees cannot commit a *faux pas*, but a forester and a landscape gardener, unless they have a fine feeling as well as good training, can rob them of half their dignity. The first impression left by these grounds is that the work has been done judiciously; though the grass be closely tended, though the trees have been disciplined, the spirit of the woodland is upon everything. In the first place, the game shows an unconcern that speaks eloquently of seclusion, an unconcern that recalls a remark made by John Ruskin in one of his Oxford Lectures. He said he looked to the time when men would be better pleased to admire game than to shoot it. Here in this shaded avenue, within a couple of hundred yards of the main road, the truth and possibility of the remark come back with a force never realised when one stands beyond covertside hearing the first faint tap, tap of a line of beaters.

Within a short distance of the gate, the full quality of the silence is apparent. From first to last it is a dominant feature of the place; this splendid silence, with a quality of its own, strong, subtle, and enduring as the perfume of a rose pleasaunce in late June. There is nothing to take the visitor's attention from his surroundings, no officious gardeners, no obtrusive notice-boards stand in awkward uprightness to disturb the illusion as the eye revels in the beauty of the surroundings and feasts upon the multiform attractions of shape and colour.

At the end of an avenue that must be beautiful from January to December, the vista opens; and across the wide loch, whose little waves beat without sound upon the shore, the Castle is seen in its distant setting of greenery like one of the gorgeous white structures that rises in a mirage seen in the heart of the African desert, or like an Aladdin palace summoned from the realms of space at the bidding of some prince of the genii. Nearer approach and closer

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examination may reveal a building less attractive to eyes accustomed to a style of architecture more florid than the Scotch baronial, but the first glimpse of Lochinch Castle across the shining waters of the loch is exquisitely pleasing. I cannot well compare the sensation with those most akin to it—my first view of Constantinople from the sea of Marmora, or of Tiberias from the hills facing Mount Hermon, brought me a similar thrill of pleasure; but a better comparison would be with a masterpiece of

LOCHINCH CASTLE FROM THE LAKE.

painting suddenly seen for the first time by one who visits a gallery full of fine pictures. Just as some subtle quality of colouring or brushwork, or the gift I will call artistic emotion, for lack of a better term, seizes the eye and stimulates the sense, so Lochinch Castle seen for the first time stirs the appreciative faculties.

A broad path, carefully kept, winds round the loch, with woodland rising on a slope to the right; and soon the great sheet of water is left behind, and the traveller reaches the wrought-iron gate, a masterpiece of its kind, that gives admission to the flower-gardens and to the ruins of Kennedy Castle.

Past the gate there is water in plenty: a channel connecting the two lochs runs between banks covered with turf that has the smooth quality of a billiard-table and a softness as of velvet. Looking down, one sees the channel reach the main body of water after passing under a bridge leading to the outer grounds. No terms, unless chosen by a consummate master of words, could do justice to this view; and among modern artists the late Birket Foster would have been the best man to commit its beauties to canvas. There is no assistance afforded by association—the entire work is comparatively modern; but the picture would probably impress itself upon the eye of the most casual visitor with an insistence worthy its extreme beauty.

After leaving the waterway connecting the two lochs, a very distinctive feature of these grounds becomes apparent—the paths are all of grass, the steps leading from one elevation to another are of grass; there is

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A Canal Between the Lakes

no gravel path to be seen. The eye passes from the greenery of the trees to the greenery of the grass until it learns to be critical and appreciative of the most delicate shading that Nature's palette has yet produced. Just as the student of a great picture learns to find fresh beauties day after day, until the canvas glows with the spirit of the master who gave it birth, so the wanderer in the grounds of Lochinch Castle becomes aware of one beauty succeeding another, until at last his capacity for surprise is overtaken by his capacity for enjoyment, and he looks on with an overmastering and supreme content, as a schoolboy looks at the transformation-scene of his first pantomime.

Doubtless the full accomplishment of the people who laid out these grounds is not apparent to the untrained eye; and, conversely, there may be aspects that can be best appreciated by the observer ignorant of the rules that govern landscape gardening. The waters of White Loch and Black Loch do most to establish the constant variety of scene. Little, tree-crowned islets in the lake add to the attraction of the water and give shelter to the wildfowl.

The Terraces at Castle Kennedy

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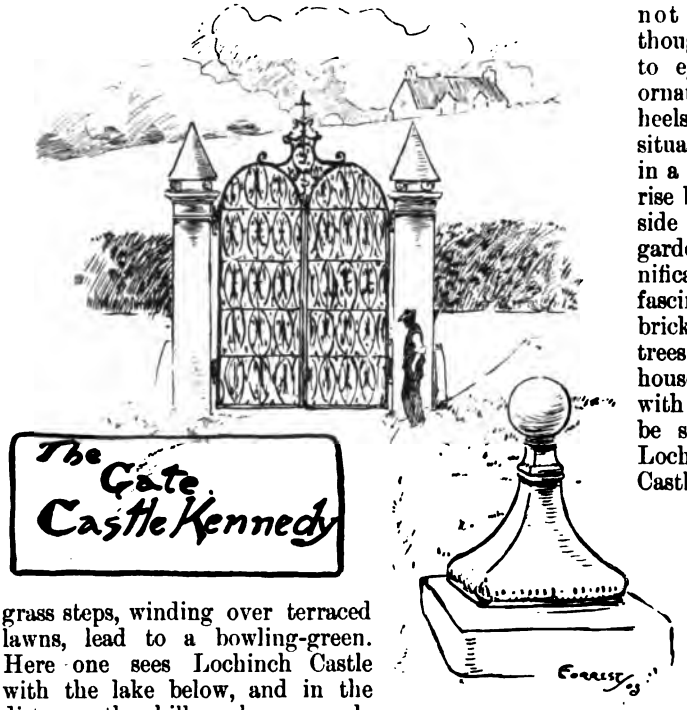
The green steps lead to unexpected points of view. Here they point the way to Kennedy Castle, a moss- and ivy-covered skeleton some three hundred years of age and in a condition of picturesque ruin, more on account of a fire than the passing of the years. In quite another spot, the



The Gate Castle Kennedy

grass steps, winding over terraced lawns, lead to a bowling-green. Here one sees Lochinch Castle with the lake below, and in the distance the hills, whose purple shadows vary their shade with every hour of the day. Round the bowling-green is a well-trimmed hedge, with chestnut and ash, fir and pine, growing above. Each spot seems more attractive than the last, and the only incitement to move on is the feeling that greater attractions remain to be seen. Contrasts and comparisons remain the keynote of the charm; and though the natural beauty is left untouched, there is abundant evidence that every avenue of trees is part of the whole scheme.

Down one walk, where the pheasants seem to be in abundance, the avenues are curiously varied. One is entirely laid out in spruce, another with holly, a third with "monkey puzzlers," a fourth with cypress. They say that Field-Marshal Stair laid out these grounds on the plan of some battle, and that these various avenues stand for regiments. It will be remembered that the grounds of Blenheim are similarly treated.

of the paths are bordered by grassy mounds that look like earthworks; and here, too, the military idea may be in evidence.

Round the house and private gardens a rail runs, and by the gate a courteously worded notice turns the visitor's steps. Lochinch Castle itself is a modern specimen of Scotch baronial architecture, not lacking a severe beauty, though possessing few attractions to eyes accustomed to the more ornate style that trod upon the heels of the Renaissance. The situation at the head of the loch in a hollow of the great hills that rise behind is admirable. By the side of the grounds the flower-garden is comparatively insignificant, and lacks the extreme fascination of gardens whose red-bricked walls have supported fruit trees for centuries. The glass houses do not court comparison with the more extensive ranges to be seen further south; and yet Lochinch Castle — or Kennedy Castle, as the place is sometimes called—must be reckoned one of the most remarkable places in Great Britain, by reason of its situation, the inventive genius that first laid its garden out, and the lavish care and scrupulous attention that avail to keep them in such exquisite order.

One learns that in days past the Earl of Stair threw them open to the public every day, and that the public acknowledged this generous treatment by destroying or damaging trees, sliding down the terraced lawns, and littering the place with the *débris* of picnics. It must be admitted that the total exclusion of strangers would have been warranted by these circumstances. Happily, the case was met by restricting admission, and only allowing large companies to pay visits by special permission. The average man must find difficulty in believing that people accorded the privilege of unrestricted wandering through such a fair domain would have the heart to disturb the serene beauty of the surroundings; for whatever the degree of the appeal may be, it must at least embrace the visitor's greatest capacity for admiration. It has not for all the subtle attraction of a Beethoven symphony, or a landscape by Corot, or a Shakespeare sonnet; and yet it lacks no feature of popular beauty

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while affording aspects that reward the more careful eye. Take a view of the Castle from the far end of the path that boasts a succession of avenues on either side, and you have a picture that would appeal by reason of its direct simplicity even to the happy individual who goes into ecstasies of admiration over the average supplement to Christmas numbers of the weekly papers. Look at the lighting of that gorgeous panorama among the hills, and you will find effects that few save Corot and Sisley, among the dead, and Camille Pissarro, among living artists, have succeeded in putting on canvas. Catch the view from the bowling-green at a moment when the sunlight is brightest, and you will believe that had Mendelssohn seen it, we might have had a companion to the Scotch Symphony. Stroll down one of the ever-silent glades where the rabbits are frisking within a few yards of your feet, and stately pheasants watch you on all sides; gather from the depths of the silence the sound of an ever-stirring life amid the leaves and bracken; watch the sunlight filtering through the tree-tops and weaving all its fantastic tapestry of light and shadow across the woodland—and you will experience the emotion that is experienced before masterpieces of art or music or literature. There is no alloy to the sense of satisfaction—the eye is never hurt by any failure to preserve the harmony of this rare place. The labour must have been very great, the result could hardly be surpassed.

If the charm is so overwhelming by day, what must it be on a fine summer's night? How would a pastoral play fare in such a place? How would Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," adequately interpreted and set to Mendelssohn's music, fare here, or even Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel"? Surely Shakespeare's self never saw, save in dreams, a place more ideal? There are many famous houses in Scotland whose grounds are remarkable for their beauty, but there is none I know whose designers have managed to tone down so

THE RUINS OF CASTLE KENNEDY.

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completely the rugged, inhospitable aspect that is so distinctive of most parts of Scotland. The harsh beauty noticeable on many Scottish estates is absent here. The hills have lost their fierceness while adding to their beauty; there is no suggestion of boulder-strewn spaces, where the hardiest sheep are sorely exercised to obtain a bare subsistence.

I went to Lochinch Castle led by rumours that had reached me from time to time; went without technical knowledge that might have revealed certain set forms of decoration; asked no questions, looked at no guide-books, and had no other equipment than a catholic appreciation for beauty, and a modest experience of the world's show places. I left it well convinced that a more attractive demesne would be far to seek. It combines all the features that go to satisfy the most varied requirements, and the sea air is over everything. There seems small prospect of a change. The Earl of Stair owns the land for miles round, and the latest holders of the title have shown no disposition to develop this corner of Wigtownshire. Seaside resorts lack no more than their consent to spring into life; sanatoria would attract invalids from all parts of Great Britain; the fishing industry is hardly developed; and land that would be invaluable for building purposes is given over to the few dairy-farmers, whose farms extend over thousands of acres. In other parts, particularly in the South of England, big landowners do not hesitate to cut manors into building-plots, and give estates by the sea over to the wealthy speculator who can fill them with serried rows of lodging-houses.

He who goes in search of a house on the Wigtownshire estate of the Dalrymple family will need a stout heart and a stout pair of boots—he will wear both out before his quest is ended. Perhaps the building mania is in its earliest stage, and the operations we regard with wondering eyes will be deemed trifling by our descendants. In that case the builder may lay hands on part of the Castle Kennedy Estate, and establish the dull rows of monotonous villas that mark prosperous villages, and in this establishment rob the district of the great charm of restfulness. All this is possible without being probable. It would appear that this corner of Wigtownshire is destined to know no intrusion upon its restfulness other than the rumble of a few trains passing to and from Stranraer. And until some change comes to the district, or the privileges so courteously granted to one and all are rescinded or curtailed, Lochinch Castle will be worth a journey from the Metropolis, and will yield the appreciative visitor a splendid return for the long and tiring journey that lies between him and his destination.

PORTS.

THE rolling years that shift and drift
Are like a lonely sea,
Upon whose breast floats in to rest
Driftwood of memory.

Oh, many a heart a haven is,
Where these lost hulks may find
Refuge and peace and sure release
From every storm and wind.

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.

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"AND THE NEXT THING, PLEASE?"
By St. Clair Simmons.

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JOYCE AND THE YOUNG HOOLIGAN.

By DOROTHY BRAITHWAITE.

JOYCE is four years old, but she is many other things besides—she is a philosopher, she is a British subject, and she is also my niece, which collection of advantages are surely calculated to content any reasonable soul. She is extremely pretty, and at times extremely wicked, a combination which I understand is not uncommon in this pretty world. She has wide, insinuating brown eyes, an expressively *retroussé* little nose, and a mouth—but, la la! her mouth is capable of expressing so many emotions that it beggars my modest powers of description. Her little brown head is arranged with six little corkscrew curls, tied at one side (on state occasions) with a bow of blue ribbon, giving her a fascinatingly early Victorian appearance. Joyce loves most people, and everybody loves her, which is an entirely agreeable arrangement; but also her affections are comparative. I imagine her heart to contain a well-regulated thermometer, beginning at 90 and going up to 150, or thereabouts. Against 150 are written Mummie and Daddie, Jinnie, an ancient but enterprising donkey who takes her for drives, and last, but perhaps in largest letters, Grannie, for grannie is as devoted as all grannies should be, and adores without spoiling her. Joyce has a belief unfailing in her grannie—no one is so wise, no one so kind, no one so worthy of universal respect; and he who dares to say a word against her, or forgets to give her her due, must reckon with Joyce, a formidable adversary indeed. I fondly believe that I occupy a place somewhere near, but a mere aunt has no right to compete with grannies. Occasionally I am privileged to take Joyce for a walk.

"Joyce," I suggested one morning, "shall we take the air in Kensington Gardens?"

"Do you think you could take care of me?" inquired Joyce doubtfully.

"That is not the question," I explained; "can you take care of me?"

Joyce faced the responsibility bravely. "I'll try," she answered; so we went upstairs to get ready. She was dressed in her best coat, but when it came to her Sunday hat, of a floppy description, she rejected it firmly. "Nana," she said quietly but positively, "I will not wear that hat, it doesn't suit me"; so nana, who secretly agreed, submissively sought out another.

"Joyce," I said sternly, "little girls must obey their elders.

"Should they?" she said; and then inspiredly: "Why don't you do what grannie tells you, then?"

"I am not a little girl," I explained hastily.

"Aren't you?" said Joyce, with some sarcasm. I was glad that the obvious retort had escaped her, but she made up for it. "You're very young, you know," she affirmed. "I heard my grannie tell mummie that it was the only excuse for you."

I hastily changed the subject. "Are you ready?" I asked.

Joyce leapt from her seat, banging her nose against the table. "Accidents will happen," she quoted philosophically, as she vigorously rubbed it.

We sallied forth hand in hand, walking at a good rate.

"Good morning, mister," remarked Joyce suddenly, apparently to no one in particular.

"Whom were you addressing?" I inquired.

She indicated a beery-eyed crossing-sweeper. "A friend o' mine," she explained. Joyce's friends are, indeed, many and various.

As we walked along, my observant niece directed my attention to many objects of interest that would have otherwise escaped my notice. "Look at that shockin' little boy runnin' away from his nana. What do you think will happen to him?" inquired Joyce delightedly.

"Something awful," I thought.

"A policeman," suggested Joyce, with bated breath; but just then the runaway's iniquitous career was cut short by a kerbstone, and he fell headlong upon the pavement.

Joyce's eyes filled with tears. "He's hurt hisself!" she cried; and disregarding nana's command never to leave go my hand, she ran to comfort him. She pulled him up and tried to quiet his sobs. "Would *you* like this?" she asked, and held up a small black doll. The little boy grabbed it ungraciously

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and, ceasing to howl, sought refuge in his nurse's arms. Joyce rejoined me. "Pore little feller," she said; and then, with a burst of indignation: "He might have said 'Thank you,' though."

I quite agreed.

"But boys hasn't much manners nowadays," she explained, and again I quite agreed.

Joyce now became engaged upon a task to which I believe we all were slaves in our youth—namely, that of taking each paving-stone at a stride—sometimes short, sometimes long. It made our progress a trifle uncertain. We did reach the park, however, and Joyce having conducted me through the most fashionable perambulator-walks, suggested a rest and some lunch—a collection of ambitious-looking fancy biscuits, which seemed to dissolve into crumbs more easily than any biscuits I had ever seen before.

Photo by] JOYCE. [*Gabell.*

"Hallo!" she said suddenly, "here comes Billy Green!"

Master Green, a young gentleman of about six years, was advancing towards us with evil intent written upon every line of his face.

"He's rather a bad little boy," remarked Joyce uneasily.

"Never mind him," I said; but I also had a presentiment of coming disaster.

Master Green reached us. He, too, had evidently eluded his nana. "Boo!" he observed, lustily addressing Joyce, who eyed him haughtily.

He began to dance, first on one leg and then on the other. "You've got a silly old grannie!" he shouted, indicating Joyce's middle coat-button with an extremely dirty fore-finger.

Joyce's face turned scarlet. "How dare you!" she snorted.

"Pore little girl! Your grannie's a silly old grannie! your grannie's a silly old grannie!" he sang, with a short *pas seul* between each sentence.

I must just remark that Master Green has not the personal acquaintance of the lady in question; but in a moment of indiscretion Joyce had confided to him that her grannie was, without exception, the best in the world.

Joyce gave a long-drawn scream of fury and collapsed into bitter wailings. "Wicked, wicked boy, how dare he! He said my beautiful grannie was silly! Take me away! oh, take me away!"

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We were becoming quite a centre of interest, and I think that Joyce's grief was much intensified by the fact that her grannie's reputation was being dragged in the dust before so many spectators.

Master Green, entirely delighted with his evil work, was describing triumphant circles upon the path. "Silly old grannie! silly old grannie!" he chanted.

I turned to him. "Little monster!" I said. "Go away!"

He was about to retort when a strong arm seized him from behind, and his nurse, in a voice of thunder, commanded him to come away. From her face I could read pretty plainly what his ultimate fate would be. I felt glad, but turned my attention to my hysterical niece.

"Come, come," I said, "we will go home." We managed to edge our way through the staring children who were gazing at Joyce in round-eyed astonishment, for she was known to be one of the most self-possessed young women who frequented the Gardens. As soon as we were outside we took a cab. I tried to dry her tears, but they only came the faster. "She is—is—is—isn't so—s-silly, is she?" she sobbed.

"Of course not—you know she is not. Why, that stupid little boy has never even seen her. Now, be true to your philosophy," I said.

By the time we reached home, Joyce's sobs had almost ceased, but it was a very bedraggled, tear-stained little lady who flung into the drawing-room and collapsed again in grannie's arms.

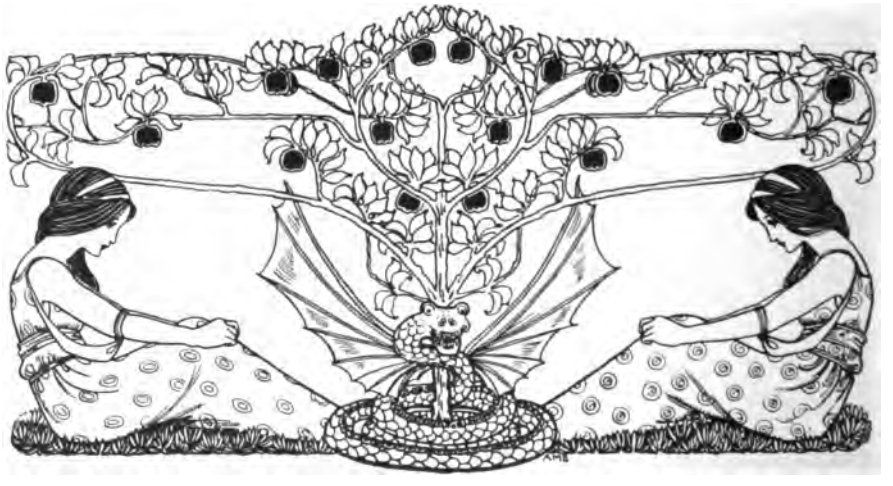
Grannie, almost in tears herself, begged to hear the story. "No, no," sobbed Joyce; "it would hur—hurt your feelings most *d-d-d-drefully*." But grannie smiled and declared that it should not, and the tale was recited to the assembled company, including mummie and daddie, with occasional interjections from Joyce, such as: "Wicked, wicked thing! how c-c-could he? You ain't a silly grannie darling!" When it was concluded, Joyce hugged her grannie passionately: "Is—is your feelings hurt?" she whispered.

Grannie assured her that they were not, and pointed out to her in an elaborate but unconvincing speech that Master Green was the person to be pitied.

Then daddie, after some application of his handkerchief to his mouth, looked at Joyce solemnly. "If ever," he began with awful firmness, "if ever Mr. Green says such a thing as that again, tell him that your daddie will come and knock him down and teach him better manners."

Joyce sighed deeply. "Yes, I will," she said. "I don't believe he'll dare then."

That evening a clause was added to Joyce's prayers, which was briefly: "Please God, bless all my kind friends, but—I advise you to have nothing whatever to do with Billy Green."



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SWORN AS DEAD.

By WILLIAM WESTALL.*

THE two boys had gone to school, the two girls were upstairs making the beds, and Peter Chance, having finished his breakfast of tea and bread-and-butter (all the larder could afford), was preparing to start for the City, when a double knock came at the front door which made him jump, the postman's calls at No. 7, Queer Street being few and far between, and seldom indeed a cause for joy.

Mrs. Chance ran to the door and returned with a letter.

"For me! actually for me!" she exclaimed. "Why, I have not had a letter for ever so long!"

"For you, and no mistake: 'Mrs. Mary Chance, No. 7, Queer Street, Clapton.' And in a lawyer's handwriting, too," quoth Peter, glancing at the superscription.

"In a lawyer's handwriting! Oh, dear! can it be about Dr. Canfit's bill?"

"I don't think so. They would write to me, not to you. Shall I open it?"

"Yes, open it and let us know the worst. It will only be one trouble more," said the poor woman, sinking into a chair.

When Peter had read the letter, he stared as if he were moonstruck; then read it again and gave a shout that might have been heard next door.

"What is it? what is it? Do tell me what it is!" cried his wife.

"What is it? Why, your Uncle Simeon has left you all his property, amounting, at a low estimate, to thirty thousand pounds."

"I don't believe it. Uncle Simeon was as poor as a church mouse. Don't you remember saying, when he came to see us the year after Jack was born, as you wouldn't give fifteen shillings for all the clothes he had on his back? And he hadn't an atom of luggage—only a razor, half a comb, and a nightcap, and that was so ragged I had to mend it for him. It is a cruel joke, Peter; I don't believe it."

"I do, though. Lawyers don't make jokes; it isn't what they're paid for. Besides, how would these Liverpool people know your address if there wasn't something in it?"

"But Uncle Simeon was poor."

"He said so, and we thought so; but he must have been a miser, a regular old skinflint, and pleaded poverty to get a week's board and lodging for nothing. All he parted with was a penny bun to each of the children. But he has made up for it. Thirty thousand in trust for you, with remainder to them! Here it is in black and white: 'Dear madam. . . . Yours respectfully, Brampton, Fox, and Fitter.'"

"But what does 'in trust' mean?" asked Mrs. Chance, still only half convinced.

"I think it means that you will get the interest, but won't be allowed to touch the principal."

"And how much will that come to?"

"The interest on thirty thousand pounds, at four per cent., is twelve hundred per annum," said Chance, who, being a shipowner's clerk, was naturally quick at figures; "and twelve hundred per annum is twenty-four pounds a week, or would be if there were fifty weeks in a year."

"Twenty-four pounds a week! Oh, Peter, if it should be true, after all! Why, we could pay that horrid doctor's bill, and the butcher and baker, with one week's income; and the children should have new clothes, and you a new suit. You have not had one for two years."

Like the true woman she was, Mrs. Chance thought of those she loved before thinking of herself.

"And you must have new clothes, too, and a new bonnet and new boots, and I don't know what besides, and we will have a high old time!" exclaimed Peter rapturously. "But, God bless me! the clocks are striking nine! I shall be late at the office."

"But you won't need to go to the office now, dear, if it is true, and I really begin to think it is."

"Of course it is! But I shall have to go

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to the office all the same. I don't come in anywhere; it's all for you and the kiddies."

"Oh, Peter, don't say that! What's yours has been mine ever since we were married, and now what's mine shall be yours till death do us part!" and Mrs. Chance threw her arms round her husband's neck and wept tears of gladness.

"I must go this morning, anyhow," he said, kissing her.

"But what shall we do to make sure?"

"Go to Liverpool and see these lawyer people."

"But think of the expense; and where is the money to come from?"

"Oh, blow the expense! I'll ask the governor for a few days' holiday and a loan of five pounds; and when he sees this letter, I think he will oblige me."

Peter was right. When he preferred his request, Mr. Greg, the partner who bossed the office, looked as black as thunder; but after reading the letter he became as bland as oil, said Chance might "take a week with pleasure," and told the cashier to let him have the money, on which Chance tendered his thanks and hied him back to Queer Street.

Mrs. Chance was beaming with happiness; the girls were in the seventh heaven of delight; Tom and Jack absolutely refused to go to school again that day, and profited by their parents' absence to play truant the rest of the week; for Mr. and Mrs. Chance carried out their intention of going to Liverpool, leaving Tilly and Silly, as they were familiarly called, in charge of the house. Their strictly legal appellations were Lucinda Matilda and Nora Selina, which Mrs. Chance had found in a penny novelette, and having a romantic fancy, derived from the same quarter, that girls with grand names generally married great swells, bestowed them on her daughters—the names, not the swells; those were to come later.

Mr. Fox (of the firm of Brampton, Fox, and Fitter) received the Chances with smiles and fine words, and congratulated them on their good fortune. It was all true. The late Mr. Crabtree had invested his money in house property and sound railway stock, and the rents and dividends arising therefrom would probably exceed twelve hundred a year. For the moment, however, none of the income was available; but if Mrs. Chance desired to anticipate a part of it, the firm would only be too glad to place a few hundreds at her disposal, at a fair rate of interest.

In order to make matters quite clear, Mr. Fox read extracts from the will, which began: "Out of gratitude for the kindness shown to me by my niece Mary Chance, when I was at her house in"—here the date—"I, Simeon Crabtree," etc., etc.

"It was all that nightcap. I thought it was, from the first," interrupted Peter; "now I am sure."

Mr. Fox stared, and Peter explained.

"I should not wonder," said the lawyer, smiling. "Mr. Crabtree was a very eccentric man, and mending his nightcap was an attention he would appreciate. It would save him buying a new one."

"Does my husband not come in at all?" inquired Mrs. Chance.

"He does not. Indeed, the testator seems to have gone out of his way to prevent him from coming in. At your death, which I hope will not occur for many years, the estate is to be equally divided among those of your children who survive you. In the event of any one of them dying, at whatever age, before actually receiving his or her share, the trustees are directed to divide that share among the survivors; and in the improbable—I may say, the impossible—event of none of them surviving you, the property is to go, in equal proportions, to the Infirmary and the Lifeboat Society."

"So I don't come in anyhow, and I know why," quoth Peter drily. "The old screw wanted me to lend him five shillings, and as I had not five shillings to spare, and we had put him up a whole week, I refused. However, as the wife and children are handsomely provided for, I am extremely obliged to him all the same."

"And I'll provide for you, Peter, dear; so it will come to the same thing," said his wife.

"Which you can easily do by insuring your life in his favour. There is nothing in the will against that," observed Mr. Fox. Then he finished reading it, and showed a statement of the property comprised in the trust, which had been valued at something over thirty-one thousand pounds, all of which was, of course, very satisfactory; and when Mr. Fox again offered an advance, Mrs. Chance, after a whispered consultation with her husband, said that as Mr. Fox was so very obliging, she would take advantage of his kindness by "drawing a quarter."

"That means three hundred. In what shape would you like to have it?" he asked.

Mrs. Chance looked at her husband.

"I think ten sovereigns, and a crossed

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draft for the balance on a London bank to order, would be about the best shape," quoth Peter, after reflection.

"And if you put five in your pocket and I put five in mine, we cannot well lose 'em all," she observed brightly.

"Exactly; a wise precaution," said Mr. Fox gravely. "Well, if you will call again in an hour, the draft and the sovereigns will be ready for you."

"'Here it is in black and white.'"

Which they did; and left the office with the money in their pockets and joy in their hearts.

"Do you believe it now, Mary?" asked Peter, as she took his arm.

"Oh, yes, now. I have signed a receipt, you have got the draft, and I can feel the sovereigns jingling in my pocket; but until I really saw the money, I could not help having my doubts. I feared they might be finding another will, or something wrong with it, or a widow or children might be turning up."

"Garn! Everybody knows your uncle was an old bachelor; and if there had been any likelihood of a later will being found, Mr. Fox wouldn't have let you have a penny, much less three hundred pounds. He isn't made that way."

"I don't think he is," said Mrs. Chance, laughing. And then they went shopping, and she spent some of her newly acquired wealth in presents for the children; in a new shawl for herself and a new hat for Peter, which he sorely needed, the old one being more like an accordion than a respectable castor.

On the following day they returned to Queer Street, which, never bright, looked dingier than ever. Nobody lived there who could afford to live elsewhere, and the Chances presently took a house at Notting Hill Gate, of which they were as proud as though it had been a palace.

In the meanwhile, an important question had to be settled. Should Peter keep his billet at Barebones and Greg's, or not? His wife was in two minds about it; his daughters were very much against it, thinking that for their "pa" to be a common clerk was a slur on their exalted position and newly acquired respectability. But Peter did not take kindly to the idea of a life of idleness, and after trying the experiment of a long holiday, returned to the office, which so pleased Mr. Greg that he gave him a more important position and raised his inadequate salary to three pounds a week.

The girls were wroth, but Mrs. Chance approved; she saw that her husband could not be content to do nothing, and whatever made for his happiness, made for hers.

One of the consequences of the rise in the family fortunes was the disappearance of

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Tilly and Silly (the names, not the owners). The sisters insisted on being called Lucinda and Nora, and tried to live up to these more dignified cognomens.

Sweet girls they were not, both being sharp-tempered and disposed to domineer; but Lucinda possessed the sharper tongue and the stronger will. They had gone through the regular School Board curriculum and were fair scholars; but being conscious of a want of polish, and desiring to shine, were sent at their own request to a finishing-school, where they learnt, among other things, to play the piano, use their aitches correctly, and, incidentally, to despise their parents, whose education in this and some other respects had been neglected.

Jack and Tom also went to a boarding-school with more satisfactory results, partly, perhaps, because girls quarrel with their tongues, whereas boys fight with their fists, and there is no more effective antidote for vanity and conceit than a few sound thrashings.

Mrs. Chance, being still in the mind to provide for her husband, wanted to insure her life for three thousand pounds, and a proposal to that effect was made to a great mutual society, but after a medical examination the proposal was politely declined and no reason given. Peter, greatly alarmed, consulted an eminent physician, who, however, diagnosed nothing more serious than impaired vitality and a weak heart, saying that, with care, Mrs. Chance might live as long as her husband, and recommended mental quietude, nourishing food, and cheerful society.

"I don't wonder that you have a weak heart after what you went through in Queer Street," said Peter afterwards. "That was a hard time, and harder for you than for me."

"Well, it was hard; but if it had not been for my health failing, we should not have been so badly off; and do you know, dear, I sometimes think we are not so much happier for having got Uncle Simeon's money."

"Nonsense! We have no money troubles now, and a fine house to live in."

"Too fine. It is a great anxiety and expense, and the girls are not what they used to be, though Tilly's temper was always rather trying. As she isn't here, I may call her by the old name; it comes easier."

"Yes, Tilly liked to boss the show, even when she was quite little. Where she got her temper from, beats me. Not from you, I am sure, Mary."

"Nor from you. There's many things not to be accounted for, and tempers is one of them. I am sorry they would not insure my life. Three thousand pounds put out at interest would be a nice thing for you when I'm gone."

"Garn! Don't talk about going. You'll live longer than me. Besides, I can always earn my living."

"You might fall into bad health, Peter, or lose your place; however, we must lay as much by for you. With my twelve hundred a year and your three pounds a week we should be able to save a good deal."

"Save! I should think so, indeed; and when this schooling is finished, we shall be at less expense."

Peter reckoned without his children. The schooling cost a good deal more than Mary and he anticipated. Along with a little fresh knowledge and a few showy accomplishments, Lucinda and Nora acquired notions and habits which were incompatible with economy. When they left school, nothing would serve them but hiring a carriage and engaging a page. Their mother demurred, but she was no match for the allied sisters, Peter intervening without success.

"It's not father's money, anyhow. He needn't say anything," observed Lucinda tartly, and Mrs. Chance wept and yielded.

The boys behaved better; they neither flouted their mother nor belittled their father. Yet they, too, were expensive. Jack, who had a turn for mechanics, became a gentleman apprentice at an engine shop at Blackwall. Tom, fancying the law, was articled to a solicitor in the city, and for each of them a heavy premium had to be paid. Their favourite pastime was boating and yachting, and outriggers and yawls can neither be obtained nor kept for nothing. So Peter and Mary saved nothing out of their thirteen hundred and something a year—were, indeed, sometimes as hard put to it to make both ends meet as they had been when they lived in Queer Street.

When, so far as appearances went, the Chances were at the height of their fortune, a great misfortune befell them. One day, Jack and Tom went out in their yawl, and Jack came back alone. He had lost both the yawl and his brother. How it happened, he could scarcely tell. He had done his best to save Tom, but he thought he might have done more, and this idea, preying on his mind, made him morose and unhappy.

Tom's death was a terrible blow for his parents. Mrs. Chance took to her bed, and

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Peter, knowing that his daughters were neither very dutiful nor very affectionate, left his place and gave all his time to his wife—in some respects an imprudent step, yet never regretted. It was always a satisfaction to him that during the last few months of Mary's life he had never been away from her more than an hour or two at a time. She recovered so far as to be able to go about and spend a part of the summer at the seaside, and Peter, always hopeful, began to think she would get better.

Then another misfortune overtook them.

Jack had never got on well with his sisters; when they were not domineering, they were nagging. After Tom's death he gave up yachting and was more at home, and they did not make home happy for him. One morning, by no means for the first time, they had a desperate quarrel. At night Jack did not come home, and the next morning Peter received a letter:—

"DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,—I can stand it no longer. By the time you get this I shall be off. You have always been good to me. Forgive me; and may God bless you.—JACK."

Peter was the gentlest of men, but he could be angry. His wrath was terrible. For once in their lives Lucinda and Nora were cowed into silence, and shrank weeping from their father's presence.

Every effort was made to trace Jack, or find his body, for the detectives whom Peter consulted suggested that the lad might have committed suicide. Rewards were offered; advertisements inserted in many papers—home, colonial, and foreign; all without avail.

It killed Mrs. Chance. She never rallied from the shock, and it presently became obvious, even to her husband, that her days were numbered.

"Uncle Simeon's money has not been a blessing to us, Peter," she said to him as he sat by her bedside. "Both the boys gone, and the girls not as we should like them to be. It would have been better both for them and for us if we had sent them to work instead of to a fine school."

"Maybe; but we should have been called mean and selfish, and it was not in us to do it; and our kindness is no excuse for the girls behaving as they have done," returned Peter in a tone of mingled anger and sorrow. "And the lads did not turn out badly, though they were rather extravagant, with their yachting and that. They never drank or kept late hours, and were always good to us; and Jack will come back, I am sure he will."

"You don't think, then——"

"That he committed suicide? Not a bit of it. I never thought so for a moment. It was only an idea of those detectives. He will come back."

"But I shall never see him again in this world, never, never. Oh! Jack, Jack! . . . I hope the girls will be good to you when——"

"Don't trouble about me," interrupted Peter hastily; "I can always make a living It won't take much to keep me. I never was an expensive chap."

"You never were. No woman could have a better husband," said Mary, laying her wasted hand softly on his. "Kiss me, Peter."

Peter kissed her, but speak he could not; and there followed a long silence, broken only by the ticking of the clock on the mantelpiece. Nor did his wife speak again, either then or afterwards. It was her last day on earth.

This crowning calamity, and their father's despairing grief, moved Lucinda and Nora as deeply as natures so selfish could be moved. They wept bitterly, and looked sorrowful and contrite; their manner became subdued and sympathetic, and Peter thought that their mother's death had made a radical change in their characters.

To him personally it made all the difference in the world. The light of his life was gone out and he was left literally penniless. The sisters received their inheritance, amounting to upwards of £20,000, and took a house in Kensington. Their father went with them. He had nowhere else to go. Jack's share was placed in the custody of the Court of Chancery, there to remain until it was claimed by its rightful owner.

As soon as these matters were settled, Peter applied for his old place, or any other the firm might like to give him; but Mr. Greg was dead, and a Pharaoh had arisen who knew not Joseph. He had no opening, nor was likely to have. Peter tried elsewhere again and again, but his grey hairs were against him; men past fifty were not wanted, and at length he gave up the attempt in despair and resigned himself to eating the bitter bread of dependence; for the impression made on Lucinda and Nora by their mother's death had not proved permanent, and though they gave their father board and

lodging, they gave him little either of respect or love. Moreover, the sense of possession had made them niggardly, and though they could not let him "go shabby," as Lucinda put it, they spent no more on his clothes than they could help; and if Nora, who was slightly the more generous, had not given him an occasional half-crown, he would not have had the wherewithal for 'bus fares and tobacco.

The poor man had a Cockney accent and was apt to get mixed up with his aitches, which, in his daughter's opinion, made him ineligible for society; so, when there were visitors, he had to retire to the kitchen; also when he wanted a pipe, smoking in any other part of the house being forbidden.

Another cause of friction was Jack. The sisters thought, or pretended to think, that he was dead. Nora believed he had committed suicide. But Peter stoutly maintained that he was alive, and some day would come back.

"Why doesn't he write, then?" demanded Nora. "If he were alive, I am sure he would."

"How do you know he hasn't written? Letters go astray often enough, especially when they have to cross the sea. He will come back, I tell you. Nothing shall convince me to the contrary."

The sisters did not try to convince him; they merely gave him a glance of pitying contempt. Nevertheless, Peter was right. Jack had written. The letter came one morning when Lucinda was alone, and recognising her brother's handwriting, and having a curiosity that knew no scruple, she opened it.

"Father won't mind," she thought; "and if he does, it won't matter."

Jack, who had seen the announcement of his mother's death, asked his father's forgiveness and wrote very penitently; but as he had gone to a strange land, he meant to stay there till he could return with credit, and he was already doing well. Then he added: "I hope the girls are being good to you, though I have my doubts. They are cats; and

"Shrank weeping from their father's presence."

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Tilly has both teeth and claws. But for her I should not have gone away."

On reading this, Lucinda lost her temper and threw the letter into the fire, for which, to do her justice, she was afterwards sorry; but the deed being done and not to be undone, she resolved to say nothing about it either to her father or Nora.

Notwithstanding their fine names and fair fortunes, neither sister had married, probably because they were too fastidious or looked too high; for they had received offers, and Lucinda had once been engaged; but her lover, getting a glimpse of the claws and teeth, wisely cried off. Some few years after Jack's disappearance, she became engaged again, this time to a middle-aged stockjobber of the name of Jevons, who, being of a practical turn of mind, stipulated that she should put four thousand pounds into his business, on which he guaranteed her a minimum interest of five per cent. On this condition, he took her, claws and all, though during their courtship she did her best to keep them out of sight.

They discussed family affairs naturally, and the stockjobber was told all about Jack.

"You ought to get that money," he remarked. "It was put in Consols, no doubt, and the rise in the price of stocks and the accumulated interest must have increased the original amount to something like twelve thousand pounds—six apiece for you and your sister. It's worth having, Lucinda."

"Rather! I should think so, indeed," she said eagerly. "But how can we get it? It's Jack's, isn't it?"

"It would be if he were alive; but if he's dead, it's yours, according to your uncle's will."

"But how are we to prove he is dead?"

"You cannot. All the same, I think there is a way. When anybody has disappeared and not been heard of for a long time, and there is reason to believe he is dead, the court will give leave for him to be sworn as dead, or something of that sort. You have a solicitor, I suppose? He would tell you all about it."

"Mr. Oldacre, of Ely Place, has always acted for the family; he collects our rents and that, and his charges are moderate."

"Well, had not you better see him? If you like, I will go with you, and it would be as well for Nora to go, too."

The proposal was accepted; all three went to Mr. Oldacre's office, and Jevons, acting as the sisters' spokesman, laid the case before him and asked him what they should do.

"Make an application, supported by affidavits, to have John Chance presumed dead; and if the court grants the application, the same consequences will follow as if his death had been proved by medical certificate," said the solicitor.

"You mean we shall get the money?" queried Lucinda.

"You would, of course, get the money."

"And do you think the court will grant the application?"

"It depends entirely upon the view taken by the judge, and I cannot, of course, answer for him," said Oldacre cautiously. "It is about even betting, I fancy. Do you instruct me to proceed in the matter?"

"I think we do," quoth Jevons, looking interrogatively at the sisters, each of whom answered: "Yes, we do."

"Good! Now for the facts," rejoined Oldacre, and went on to ask the sisters a number of questions and made copious notes of their answers. Then he said "Good!" again, adding that if they would call the the next day but one, the affidavit would be ready for their signatures.

When Peter heard what was going on, he was more deeply moved than he had been since his wife's death, and jeopardised his board and lodging by giving his daughters a piece of his mind.

"You want to rob your brother, you who are so well off, and him in a foreign land. It's worse than robbing a church. I wonder you aren't ashamed of yourselves," he said.

"It's nothing to you, anyhow. You just mind your own business, or it will be the worse for you!" screamed Lucinda in a rage.

"I know what you mean; you mean I shall have to go to the workhouse. Well, I'll go. I can't be unkinder treated than I am here."

"Don't be foolish, father," put in Nora, by way of restoring peace. "As Jack is dead, we have no brother to rob; and if we don't get the money, it will go to the Government, and that would do nobody any good."

"Jack is not dead!" asserted the old man excitedly.

"Well, there is no use having more words about it. We shall hear what the judge says when the case is brought before him next month."

On this Peter saw Oldacre, and said he should protest against his son being presumed dead.

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"You must intervene in the case and retain counsel, then; and as all you can do is to state that you don't believe your son is dead, I don't think it would be worth your while. The judge will form his opinion on the affidavit," replied Oldacre.

There was no more to be said. Peter simply could not retain counsel, and, as he himself saw, it would be of no use if he did. All he could do was to live in hope and double his efforts to trace Jack.

His favourite haunt in fine weather was by the riverside and about the docks and wharfs, where he occasionally fell in with old cronies and seafaring men whom he knew. The latter he would ask whether, in any of the countries to which they had been, they had happened to meet his son.

"A tall, young fellow, six feet in his stockings, and well built, brown eyes and sandy hair; by this time twenty-six years old," he would say.

Several had met young fellows answering to this description, but none answering to the name of John Chance. Yet Peter did not despair. "I shall find him all the same," he thought, and took fresh courage from the failure of his daughters' first attempt to have their brother's death legally "presumed." On the ground that all had not been done that might be done to find the missing man, the judge ordered advertisements to be inserted and repeated in divers English, foreign, and colonial newspapers, and said that, in the event of nothing being heard of him, they might renew the application in six months.

Peter felt sure that something would be heard of him, and, by way of leaving no stone unturned, continued his visits to the docks. But his inquiries were as abortive as the advertisements, and on the renewal of the application the judge gave leave for John Chance to be "sworn as dead."

When this and some other formalities had been complied with, Nora and Lucinda (who had meanwhile become Mrs. Jevons) were informed that, if they presented themselves at the office of the Paymaster-General at twelve o'clock noon on a certain day, accompanied by their solicitor (to identify them), they would receive an order on the Bank of England for eleven thousand eight hundred and sixty pounds, being the net amount of the late John Chance's estate.

The sisters invited their father also to bear them company; but he indignantly refused and betook himself once more to the waterside, merely to while away the time, and get as far away from his daughters as might be, for, though still convinced that his son lived, he had now no hope whatever of aught happening to prevent the consummation of what he regarded as a downright robbery.

Listless and sad, he was wandering about, thinking of Mary and Jack, and all the troubles Simeon Crabtree's money had brought him, when an old friend clapped him on the shoulder.

"Hallo, Peter Chance! How are you, and why looking so glum?" he exclaimed in a loud, cheery voice.

"Peter Chance?" repeated a rough-looking man, with a sunburnt face, who happened to be passing. "Excuse me, but are you really Mr. Peter Chance?"

"That is my name, sir."

"And do you live, or did you live, at Notting Hill Gate?"

"Several years since I did."

"And had you a son?"

"I had two sons; one called Tom is dead, another called Jack went abroad. Perhaps you have met him? A tall, young fellow, six feet in his stockings, well built and broad shouldered."

"Met him? Of course I have! We were mates—my name is Smithels; and here's a letter from him. He said he wrote once by post and got no answer, so he wanted me to look you up and give it into your own hands."

"At last! Thank God—thank God!" murmured Peter, as he opened the letter. Then with trembling hands he adjusted his spectacles. One glance was enough. He saw no more, and for the moment wanted to see no more, than the last words: "Your loving son, Jack."

"Can you spare an hour, Mr. Smithels? You would greatly oblige me," he said hurriedly. "It is a matter of nearly twelve thousand pounds, of which some people—his own sisters, I am sorry to say—are trying to rob the lad."

"Of course I can spare an hour—a whole day, if you like," quoth Smithels heartily.

"Thank you. We will take a hansom," hailing one with his stick. "The clocks went eleven some time since, but I think we shall be in time."

Peter told the cabman to drive as hard as he could to Whitehall, and when they were under way, explained to his companion what was going on, and his reason for hoping that with the help of the letter and Smithels' testimony he might prevent the transfer of

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"'Jack's alive! Jack's alive!'"

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Jack's money to Mrs. Jevons and Miss Chance.

It was past twelve when they reached the office of the Paymaster-General, and having ascertained that Oldacre and the others were in a room upstairs, the two men went there at once, entering without ceremony.

The final act was almost consummated. Lucinda, near whom were standing her husband and Oldacre, was signing something; two cheques, one for each sister, lay on a table before one of the principal clerks.

"Jack's alive! Jack's alive!" shouted Peter, waving the letter above his head.

They all thought he had gone mad.

"Who is this man?" demanded the clerk.

"I am John Chance's father," answered Peter, putting a restraint on himself and speaking with deliberation. "He is not dead. I have just got this letter; and this gentleman, Mr. Smithels, has seen him within the last three months. Here is the letter, Mr. Oldacre. I have only just glanced at it; perhaps you will kindly read it aloud."

The essential part of the letter, the part that most concerned the business in hand, was to this effect: "The knowledge of engineering I picked up at Blackwall has served me well. I am now head engineer of the Golden Fleece Mine, one of the richest in Tasmania; also a shareholder, and have more money than I either want or need. I suppose my share of old Crabtree's money is in the hands of the trustees; but, wherever it is, I am going to make it over to you, dear dad, so please see a lawyer who will put the thing through, and to whom I can send power-of-attorney for that purpose. I cannot be spared, or I would run over to see you; but if you possibly can, I should like you to pay me a visit here; nothing in the world would give me so much pleasure. If there is any temporary difficulty about money, Smithels will make that all right. If you go with him, and somebody who can identify you, to the Bank of New Zealand, they will cash your draft on me at sight for two hundred pounds."

"It seems to be genuine enough," observed Oldacre, when he had got to the end. "I suppose you know your brother's handwriting, Mrs. Jevons?" showing her the letter.

The faces of the two women were a study. Though bitterly disappointed and inwardly raging, they were trying, for decency's sake, to look as though they rejoiced in the news that baulked their greed.

"It looks like it. I think it is. Dear Jack! I am very glad he is alive," answered Lucinda faintly and with a forced smile.

"I'll be dashed if I am! Three or four hundred gone in advertising and law expenses, and nothing to show for it!" whispered fiercely her husband. "This is a plant" (raising his voice); "I don't believe a word of it——"

"Shut up, you fool!" whispered his wife, pinching him till he nearly swore. "Don't you see that as father is going to get this money, and Jack is rich, it is our interest to keep on good terms with him?"

"As there seems no doubt that Mr. John Chance is alive, I am afraid I cannot part with these cheques at present," observed the principal clerk politely.

"Of course you cannot. I think we may as well take our departure, ladies. We can do no more," rejoined Oldacre, and with that they all went forth.

"Good-bye, father," said Mrs. Jevons affably, when they were outside. "I hope you and Nora will come to us for a long visit next week; we should be so glad."

"Thank you, Tilly. Very kind of you, I am sure; but I have another invitation which will prevent my accepting yours," replied Peter.

"Another invitation?"

"Yes—Jack's. I shall go out to him as soon as possible, and stay with him as long as the dear lad will have me, which I think will be as long as I live. Good-bye, Lucinda! Good-bye, Mr. Jevons!"

"And that is the end of the story," quoth Oldacre. "Well, it might have ended worse."

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BADLY PUT!

HE: You weren't at the fancy dress ball last night.
SHE: Oh, yes, I was. My brother and I went as Beauty and the Beast.
HE: Oh—er—your make-up must have been—er—very good, for I didn't recognise you.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

A SUCCESSFUL SUITOR.

WHEN I scored my one-and-twenty,
She was seventeen and sweet,
And had devotees in plenty
Humbly kneeling at her feet;
She was wise, sincere, and simple,
She was worth a world to win;
And she had a tiny dimple
In her chin.

All the fellows in the city
Were in love with her awhile;
Some got praise and some got pity,
Some a snub and some a smile;
She was worshipped, wooed, and worried;
Once a man beheld her—time
Ceased for him, and off he hurried
Into rhyme.

So it was when first I found her
In a kind of love eclipse;
Like a bee I buzzed around her,
Hunting honey from her lips,
Humming lyrics to her beauty,
Radiant as any rose,
With no thought *de senectute*,
Or of prose.

One by one each ardent rival
Yielded as the years went by,
And—a type of the survival
Of the fittest—here am I;
Happy, having her to rhyme to;
How I love her, she shall know!
Tempus fugit! It is time to
Tell her so.

FELIX CARMEN.

HUSBAND: It's hot! Can't we have some lemonade, dear?

WIFE: I'm sorry, but it takes all the lemons I can buy to keep my light tan shoes clean!

FIRST MATRON: And what sort of people are they as 'ave come next door to you now, Mrs. Figgin? Seem inclined to be friendly like?

SECOND MATRON: Oh, yes, very, I think. They only come in Tooseday, and by Saturday they'd borrowed two flat-irons, a puddin'-basin, a loaf o' bread, a box o' tin-tacks, a meat-chopper, and my biggest saucepan.

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A VISITING justice to a certain gaol saw a prisoner who had a rat in his possession. The magistrate said: "Ah! you have a pet, I see."

CONVICT: Yes, sir; I feeds him every day. I thinks more of that 'ere rat than any other living creature.

MAGISTRATE: Ah! in every man there's something of the angel left, if one can only find it. How came you to take such a fancy to the rat?

CONVICT: 'Cos he bit the gaoler!

"I DON'T think my wife will ever buy me another box of cigars."

"Why not?"

"I smoked the last box she bought for me about the house."

EXAMINING ATTORNEY: If either counsel should say to you that circumstantial evidence unsupported by direct testimony could in no sense decide the trend of the benefit of the doubt, what would you understand by that?

JUROR: That he did not want me on the jury.

FOR SOCIABILITY'S SAKE.

(Scene: Birthday morning. Among other presents Tommy has received a valuable canary.)

MOTHER (in next room): Kitty, Kitty, what are you going to do?

KITTY (who has opened the door of birdcage): Tommy wants me to introduce Nigger to his dicky-bird.

THE LITTLE MORE!

MRS. HODGE: Little boys who smoke never grow big.

THE YOUTH WITH THE PIPE: That's just wot I'm always tellin' 'im, mum!

LITTLE CLARENCE: Pa!

HIS FATHER: Well, my son?

LITTLE CLARENCE: I took a walk through the cemetery to-day and read the inscriptions on the tombstones.

HIS FATHER: And what were your thoughts after you had done so?

LITTLE CLARENCE: Why, pa, I wondered where all the wicked people were buried.

THE Hon. Miss Vere de Vere, whose manners were very finnicky and overbearing, was dining at bluff Lord Countryside's table. His Lordship happened to overhear this young lady remark as she received her plate: "Oh, what a cartload he's given me!" She found the dish exceptionally good, however, and expressed a desire for more, whereupon her host calmly asked the guest sitting next her to "Just back Miss Vere de Vere's cart up, please!"

DEAR OLD LADY (at a crossing): Could you see me across the road, Mr. Policeman?

POLICEMAN (gallantly): See you across the road, lady? Why, mum, I could spot the likes of you a mile off.

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Extract from Winifred's Letter:—

"Having an awfully good time. . . . Went for a cycle ride with Mr. Richardson, only it came on to rain and quite spoilt it. . . . He *is* an interesting person to talk to. . . . Richardson is quite a nice name, isn't it?"

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WHY?

OH, why do women poets waste
Their talents on such themes
As show them quite devoid of taste
In seeking lyric schemes?

While, on the subject which we've heard
They talk in quiet nooks,
They never write a single word—
And that's, a man's good looks!

We've rhymed of women's beauty day
And night and loud and hard
And low and gently—every way!
And what is our reward?

Is sonnet e'er with dainty touch
Set forth in measured chime
To Arthur's eyebrow? No, not much!
Or dainty rondeau—rhyme,

To Jack's moustache, or Billy's chin?
What villanelle, ballade,
Do our attractions figure in?
The women must be mad

To slight these themes, unwrit, unread,
Waiting the trump of fame—
Now, let some smart one go ahead,
And make herself a name!

MADELINE BRIDGES.

ONE OR OTHER.

"He is very tiresome. He always seems to take the worst possible view of everything."
"Really? Is he a pessimist, or an amateur photographer?"

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Presented by] [*The Corporation of London.*

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR GRANTING A CHARTER TO THE CITIZENS OF LONDON.

FROM THE PAINTING BY SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A., IN THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.

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THE PICTURES IN THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.

BY WILFRID MEYNELL.

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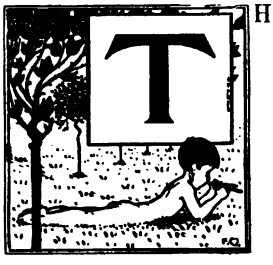

THE grasshopper does not make any very heroic figure in history. He has not, lionlike, lent a symbol to Judah, Venice, or Britain, to St. Mark, or to St. Jerome; he did not kneel at Bethlehem like the ox, nor, like the ass, bear into Jerusalem the Bearer of all burdens; no crow has he been, to feed a prophet or to devise a Bird-City intercepting earth and heaven; he has not been sung harmless with the dove, wise with the serpent, meek with the lamb; but only once for his lightness he has a mention: to the weary even the grasshopper shall be a burden. But for all his exclusion from the company, terrible or beloved, of beast, bird, or insect in myth and story, one immortal grasshopper there is—the grasshopper that made himself loudly audible beside a castaway baby, so that people, following their ears, discovered the little foundling Gresham. The cackle of geese once saved a city (disastrous precedent for councils and parliaments!) and the grasshopper that rescued only one little boy must, of course, by that comparison play second fiddle; yet he played his fiddle to very good purpose that day, as the present generation of London citizens will allow. The Gresham boy, prospering, took the grasshopper for his crest; and there he is seen veering on the vane of the Royal Exchange that a Gresham founded.

That founder was Sir Thomas, born early in the sixteenth century. He was the son of Sir Richard, Lord Mayor of London; and when he left Cambridge, he was apprenticed to his uncle, Sir John—baronetcies were not then, but the Greshams can hardly have minded that, for they seem to be born knights. Sir Thomas was still a young merchant when he went to Antwerp as the "King's agent." By him princely loans were raised in Flanders: a banker, a bit of a trader on his own account, a bit of an ambassador even. The post was a coveted one; for somebody wanted it and got it when Mary came to the throne, and Thomas Gresham had time to attend to the banking-house in what is now Lombard Street before the insufficiency of his successors at Antwerp made his own return to Flanders, as the agent of Elizabeth, a necessity. He had to keep an open ear: the seditious had to be spied upon in the interests of his royal mistress, for whom, and her courtiers, he bought in lighter moments buttons and iron coffers. Returning to London, he developed a scheme by which his inherited and acquired wealth should be of service to the citizens of London. A Bourse or Exchange, where bargainers might bargain under cover, instead of, as heretofore, in the open and often inclement air, was an old project of his father's; and Sir Thomas now took it in hand, an accessory Corporation supplying the site. England had then little or no native art; and it was a Fleming whom Sir Thomas brought over to build the institution, which, continuous in its history, if not in its fabric, was to yield to the artists of England in our time perhaps their most significant decorative opportunity.

From Gresham House, in Bishopsgate Street, Sir Thomas was able to keep an eye upon the progress made by Henricke; an impatient eye, perhaps, although an approving one. Slowly enough, after the manner of all castles in air or hovels on earth, it rose. It was completed at the close of 1567, and was christened "Royal" by Queen Elizabeth in person in 1571. The scene has been imagined, with the help of such contemporary records as survive, by Mr. Ernest Crofts, R.A., in the cartoon of his which adorns the Royal Exchange quadrangle—a picture that will be remarked for its ingenious composition and easy grouping. Sir Thomas might well desire speed; for he had other adventures in hand—he was turning Gresham House, Bishopsgate (with

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Presented by] [*Abe Bailey.*

THE CHARITIES OF WHITTINGTON.
FROM THE PAINTING BY HENRIETTA RAE (MRS. ERNEST NORMAND).

its grasshopper over the door), into a College, with seven professors; and he was making a great fiscal revolution by persuading the Queen to raise her loans abroad no longer, but to turn for them to the merchant princes at home. He was Commissioner for the better government of the Metropolis, and he sat upon a Committee to inquire into the state of foreign exchanges. Twice did Elizabeth visit Sir Thomas in the country, at Osterley and at Mayfield; and his life, all round, had been a full one when he died of apoplexy at the age of sixty. Holbein painted him; and a great sum for those days — £800 — was spent on funeral pomp and the tomb in St. Helen's — two associations with art which one hungrily puts to his account. Yet the artistry of the tomb, scarcely less than that of the portrait, was certainly alien. The day was not yet when Sir Thomas's name, in what may be called a natural sequence of events, should come into company with the names of English artists — of Leighton, of Seymour Lucas, of Stanhope Forbes, and of Tayler. The man who had substituted the English banker for the Flemish was a man who dreamed, you may be sure, of getting the same nationalisation of the arts; but the time was not yet.

If Sir Thomas chafed against the absence of English artists in the sixteenth century, in one sense he chafed in vain. Had they been at hand and his instruments, their handiwork must have perished with the Great Fire of 1666. Easel pictures could be rescued after the manner shown in Mr. Stanhope Forbes's representation of the Fire: we see the canvas borne down to the water, and for all we know it may be Holbein's

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Presented by] [*The Sun Fire Office.*

THE FIRE OF LONDON.

FROM THE PAINTING BY STANHOPE A. FORBES, A.R.A.

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Presented by] *[Carl Meyer.*

THE CROWN OF ENGLAND BEING OFFERED TO RICHARD III. AT BAYNARD'S CASTLE.

From the Painting by Sigismund Goetze.

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Presented by] [*William Vivian.*

SIR HENRY PICARD, LORD MAYOR, ENTERTAINING THE KINGS OF ENGLAND, FRANCE, SCOTLAND, DENMARK, AND CYPRUS.

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FROM THE PAINTING BY A. CHEVALLIER TAYLER.

Presented by] [*Sir Samuel Montague.*

CHARLES I. DEMANDING THE FIVE MEMBERS AT THE GUILDHALL.
FROM THE PAINTING BY SOLOMON J. SOLOMON, A.R.A.

portrait of Sir Thomas; but no such kind fate could befall frescoes doomed to perish with the parent wall. The walls could be rebuilt; so they were, and this time by an Englishman, Hawksmoor, pupil of Wren. "Physician, heal thyself," the visitor to the Royal Exchange to-day may say when he finds himself at the headquarters of assurances and insurances, and remembers that it is in the name of Gresham that the confiding citizen is asked to provide against catastrophe; for the fate of the Royal Exchange built by Henricke was that also of the Royal Exchange built by Hawksmoor. On a January night in 1838 the alarm was given. The flare was seen coming from Lloyd's Coffee Room, in the north-west corner, at about half-past ten. Taps were frozen and water was scarce, for the Thames itself was that month blocked with ice, and two hours later the whole range of offices belonging to the Exchange Insurance Company, Lloyd's Captains' Rooms, and the Underwriters' Rooms were one mass of flame. The bells, swayed by hot wind, began to ring; and men and women now living can remember catching that night, amid all the booming of a great bonfire, the sound of the old Scottish tune, "There is Nae Luck about the House." Soon after midnight the fire reached the tower, and one by one the bells fell down, carrying stonework and woodwork away with them. The Bank guard across the road suffered trepidations; soldiers from the Tower assisted the police; and the leaping flames could be

Presented by] [*John Paddon.*

KING JOHN SEALING MAGNA CHARTA.

FROM THE PAINTING BY ERNEST NORMAND.

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seen as far afield as Windsor, as if to give formal notice to Royalty of the destruction of a building that bore "Royal" for its name. By the morning, Brother Fire had done his work, and he slept (with a snarl and a start now and then) after devouring a meal that Francis of Assisi himself (who did not grudge his own habit and belongings to expectant Brother Fire) would have held to be all-sufficing.

If there was not much of a "By your leave" in the lurid message sent to Windsor that frosty night, the petition which went to Queen Victoria six years later, begging her to open the rebuilt Royal Exchange, was all in due form. There, at a cost of nearly half-a-million of money, had been set up the noble edifice we know to-day. The architect was William Tite, a name that still signals to us from Chelsea; and he achieved what all competent judges agree in pronouncing to be one of the best specimens of Renaissance architecture in our midst. Over the fine portico of Corinthian pillars are allegorical figures by the younger Westmacott; they tell a tale of Commerce; and beneath are large letters of reminder: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

The Queen's reply to an address contained a reference to the edifice which "my royal ancestors regarded with favour, and which I esteem worthy of my care." Then, turning to Mr. Magnay, the Lord Mayor, the Queen said that she conferred a baronetcy upon him; and "See," she said, turning to Sir James Graham, the Home Secretary, "that the patent is prepared." We seem to be aware of just a hint of Tudor imperiousness in her mien; for here met Elizabeth and Victoria upon common ground. It was a happy thought to commemorate that day's doings in one of the Royal Exchange cartoons—that which was painted by Mr. Macbeth, R.A., and presented by Mr. Deputy Snowdon—the first of the series that now calls for notice.

Around the ample and sheltered quadrangle, where men daily meet and market, runs a corridor, proud in its proportions, and offering on its walls panels to the painter—an offer which painter after painter, already to the number of twelve, has generously accepted. It was in 1891 that the Mercers Company and the Gresham Committee, with Sir John Watney as moving spirit, conceived the idea of the decorations, and took Lord Leighton into counsel. He approved, and perhaps partly informed, the scheme in its details; and when further asked to recommend a likely artist, he named himself, saying that he would be at once the painter and the donor. That was a rare bit of good luck to begin upon, for the cartoon "Phœnician Trading with the Early Britons on the Coast of Cornwall" was the result. I remember it upon its mammoth easel in the great studio in Holland Park Road. The artist entered upon his labours with an enthusiasm and *verve* not often exhibited by those who have suffered the assaults and the disillusions of threescore years. Drawings and studies, done in chalk upon brown paper, lay about in dozens, the drawings of which Sir William Richmond has said that perhaps none finer of their class were ever made in England. Larger studies were needed; for the painters of cartoons of this size cannot work direct from the model. They have to mount steps and scaffolding to build a picture of these vast proportions; and from their high place they can have but a bird's-eye view of the model below. Finished details must therefore be made and then copied on the large stretch of canvas. The mere physical achievement is something; and the present writer can remember that Lord Leighton, towards the end of his task, instanced the ease with which he was accomplishing it as an evidence of his strength, whereas he had otherwise baffling symptoms of dire failure in small things. "I can work at that picture like an athlete," he said hopefully; "but when I lift a light hand to brush my hair in a hurry, I sometimes turn faint." Alas! the brilliant life was to flicker out in one of those apparent irrelevances of disease; but not until the great cartoon was done. Cornish skies he studied on the spot; for he loved to run down to our farthest West, and he caught that spirit of place which is nowhere more subtly evidenced than in local clouds. He knew, too, the spirit of decoration; he knew the value of vacant space; he knew where to put his figures against the sky: and if we were now dealing with the cartoons as other than the easel pictures they become in reproductions, to Lord Leighton's cartoon would be assigned pre-eminence for the fitness of the means to the ends of mural decoration. The story, as the story in all such cases ought to do, tells itself. The dealings between the Phœnicians and the Britons are at least a tradition; and the best of the bargain, we may safely say, lies with the Phœnicians, already masters of those arts and attitudes of ingratiation that have since become a convention. It does not lie with the Britons. The man scarce cares to part with the skin, and his women give him

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Presented by] [*Lord Leighton.*

PHŒNICIANS TRADING WITH THE EARLY BRITONS ON THE COAST OF CORNWALL.

FROM THE PAINTING BY LORD LEIGHTON, P.R.A.

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no support as a salesman. Evidently they appreciate the pretty things shown to them with the love of the artist rather than with the calculations of the huckster.

That each picture should tell its story, without any aid of catalogues, to all people possessing an elementary knowledge of history, has evidently been the aim of all concerned. The list of subjects chosen by the Gresham Committee must have been made with an eye to this end. The range of subject was wide, since the pictures were to deal with City incidents, or were to illustrate the triumphs of Commerce, Education, and Liberty. The donor and the artist together made the choice of subject open to them on the list; and, apart from other appropriateness, everyone can see that "The Great Fire of London" had its proper painter in Mr. Stanhope Forbes, A.R.A., and its proper donor in the Sun Insurance Office. Like Leighton's cartoon, this, too, brings memories of Cornwall into the City, and it exhibits that blending of natural and artificial lights which has been the note of the Newlyn School. In the artist's studio a study for the picture hangs, the joy of the students of the Forbes class; and those who have there seen it by the light shining from a Cornish sky and reflected from the silver mirror of a Cornish sea may miss something of the vivid yet delicate effects of the cartoon at the Royal Exchange as seen in the murk more or less prevailing for the better half—which is also the worse half—of the London year.

In his "William the Conqueror Granting a Charter to the Citizens of London," Mr. Seymour Lucas, R.A., has contrived a scenic effect, peopled but not unduly thronged, with a due concentration in the grouping and yet an interest diffused throughout. Ecclesiastical types are prominent, and may serve as reminders that the Royal Exchange has itself a hint of the monastic in its law of exclusion of women from its almost cloistral precincts for all but one brief hour a day. Fitly enough, the Corporation made the gift of this picture. Mr. Goetze's cartoon of "The Crown of England being Offered to Richard, Duke of Gloucester, at Baynard's Castle" (Baynard's Castle formerly stood by the river near Blackfriars), shows an incident which proved that, in the event, the eloquence of Lord Mayor Shaw in 1483 was more than a match for Richard's reluctance, real or feigned, to become King.

Another civic passage of history is treated by Mr. Chevallier Tayler, whose brilliant "Entertaining of the Five Kings" now entertains everybody. It commemorates the feast given by Sir Henry Picard and the Vintners Company in 1363. The Kings of England, Scotland, Denmark, France, and Cyprus were the favoured monarchs, whose memory is still preserved in the five cheers which attend the drinking of the health of the Vintners Company at their banquets. After the feasting came the games of hazard, at which the bold Sir Henry dared to win fifty marks from a royal guest, who took his loss "in ill parte," and to whom Sir Henry returned his winnings: a return with which His Majesty meanly closed. Another monarch of somewhat obscure fiscal problems was Charles I; but you would not think from the debonair figure he presented when Mr. Solomon J. Solomon imagined him on his way to the Guildhall, that he had (as once) even a levy on the City of £120,000 in his thoughts, still less that the purpose at his heart was, in fact, the demand for the arrest of the five members.

Mr. Normand's cartoon shows the presentation of the Charter at Runnymede to King John, who looks away from the reading of the fateful document, on every syllable of which the Papal Legate hangs. Mrs. Normand's brush has a congenial theme in the distribution of doles by Dick Whittington and his wife and his child. He has "turned" into Sir Richard by this time, of course; but his kindness to the poor was suited for permanent presentation, since it at least, through all his romantic prosperity, knew no shadow of turning.

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THE SCHEME OF SUTCLIFFE, SWINDLER.

By William Hamilton Osborne.*

SUTCLIFFE sat waiting at Steve O'Donnell's, in the little room behind the bar.

Sutcliffe was the man who in 18— sent fifty alleged drummers through the West, and mailed them from the East cheques certified by his own private "bank"—cheques which they proceeded to cash in hotel offices and bars. The whole thing was manipulated by Sutcliffe and a rubber stamp at this end of the line.

He was the man who, a few years later, in 18—, sold many vacant lots in New York city, owned by absentees and non-residents, and gave his deeds backed by the title policy of his own title guarantee company. This scheme was gigantic. After that they said he was the head of a syndicate of swindlers. But he wasn't. The syndicate consisted of Sutcliffe in the first place, and Sutcliffe's private stock of fine stationery and notarial and corporate seals. It was one man against the world, and nine times out of ten he won.

These are but two instances of the methods he adopted; he had a multitude of others.

He raised his head. A man stood in the doorway. "You're here at last, John Dawson," he exclaimed. "I've been a-waitin' for you."

The man nodded his head. He looked tired and dusty. "You expected me, then?" he said.

"Yes. Your old man wrote me. Did you walk? What, all the way?"

The other assented. "Any money?" queried Sutcliffe.

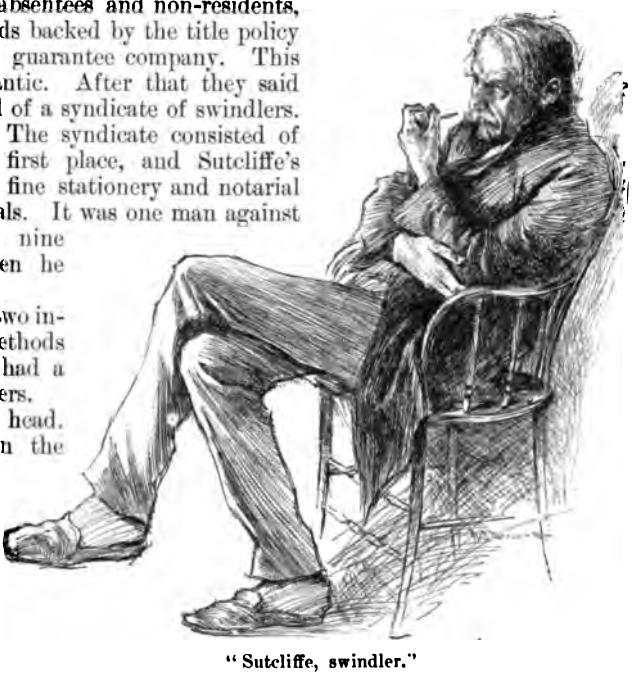
"None," said the other, "except just enough to feed on the way. The lawyers got all there was to get."

Sutcliffe pulled out a roll of bills and peeled off two. "Take it," he said; "a man feels better with money in his pocket."

"When did he go up State?" he continued.

"Who? Father? Two days ago—in the morning."

"Fourteen year's a long time," sighed Sutcliffe. "I was in for six. That's long enough for me. With the allowance, though," he continued, "he'll be out, say, in ten year. Your dad an' I travelled a-team for many a year; an' say, do you know, I came to him, just as you've come to me, years ago. An' I said to him: 'Buck, you stood by me, an' I'll stand by young John,' an' by George, John, I will! Now look a-here, sittin' here I've been doin' a lot o' thinkin', an' I want to tell you—— But say, what's the matter with me? What you want is to eat. Here, it's been waitin' for you. Sit down there an' eat it," he continued, "an' we'll talk afterwards. Not a word now. You eat an' I'll smoke."



"Sutcliffe, swindler."

The one ate, the other smoked, in silence. Sutcliffe gazed long and earnestly on the young man's countenance. He was not a bad-looking fellow. Young—about twenty-five. Good square jaw, and a nose that stood out in the air. Good eyes, but a bit too much shrewdness in them. But stamped upon him, though only in a slight degree, was that strange, indefinable expression of face and manner that was stamped to an extent much greater upon Sutcliffe, and upon all men of that ilk—the innate individuality of crime.

"His face is a fortune to us," thought

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Sutcliffe. "He's the very man—the very man. Dawson," he said aloud, as the other concluded his meal, "I want to tell you something—something I've been thinking about for a long time. Now, see here, you're in this business to stay. I suppose you've about made up your mind to that. Lord, when I think of your father before you, and your grandfather before him! You're family's a credit to you, young fellow, let me tell you that.

"Now look here," he continued, "I'm goin' to stake you for all you're worth, an' you'll find out before I get through just *how* I'm goin' to do it. The big thing, Dawson, in our business, as you know, is to get the confidence of the people. It's a great business, but that's the greatest part of it. Once get their confidence, and the rest is dead easy. Now look at me. No man ever saw me dressed up in my life. Rough clothes, rough voice, and rough manner. That's me. An' what's more, I always had a shave the day before yesterday. Why, if I went into a man's office, the first thing he'd think was that I was a tramp. In five minutes he'd begin to understand that I didn't care much what he thought. Say, in a week that man'd be pretty sure that I was a millionaire mine-owner or a cattle king from the West. I looked it, I tell you, and acted it. And there wasn't a time, when I was after big game, that I couldn't put my hand in my trousers pocket and pull out a roll like this, if necessary. Say, in another week that man'd be runnin' after me, seekin' my favour, 'stead of me seekin' his. When I got to that stage of the game, you can place your bottom dollar, Dawson, I could do business with him to my own satisfaction and have it all my own way. In a couple more weeks or so I had him cleaned out, an' he knew it. Those were my methods, Dawson, and there wasn't a man before me that ever thought of playing the game as I played it. And those methods—say, where they failed once they won twice. Why, say, you've heard about some of them. Look at that Burlingame affair, an' the way I did young Stevenson. You heard o' them."

He puffed for a minute or two in silence. "But I tell you, young John, I'm out of it. They're on to my methods, and they're on to me, specially since I went up. Say, there isn't a dodge from Maine to Texas where I wouldn't be spotted—that is, in anything worth while. But say, there was a time when I would spend as long as a year, or two year even, just layin' the foundation to get into a man's confidence. I did that with old Bently, an' after all I only got about four thousand out o' him. Still, it was money. But I been thinkin' your father an' me made a mistake. Sometimes we'd make a strike, but never over five figures, and generally only about three.

He laid down his pipe and touched the other on the arm. "What I ought to have done in the past, and what I intend to do in the future, Dawson," he said impressively,

"Sutcliffe drew his head down and whispered in his ear."

"is to deal with nothin' less than six figures. I'm going to make a big strike, or bust, an' ten to one on it I don't bust, either. Look a-here." He spread some newspaper clippings on the table. "Here's a fellow got away with over seven hundred thousand dollars—

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you understand seven hundred thousand. Here's another got three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Another four hundred and twenty-five—an' so they go. You know who these fellows are as well as I do—they're bank cashiers. But, see here, did any of these fellows actually get away? No, indeed. Here, this fellow was caught—and this—and this. Say, do you think they'd ever catch me with seven hundred thousand? You know they couldn't. And where's the money these fellows took? Gone—long before they skipped. They'd been takin' it in driblets, long before they went. When they come out, they got nothing to show for it. Now, wait a minute, Dawson," he continued. "What's the thing that makes it possible for these fellows to steal and steal and steal for years? What is it? Why, it's because they got the confidence of every mother's son in the bank an' in the community, and that's what it is. That's the thing. An' why don't they get away with the stuff? I'll tell you why. It's because they're fools, instead of being knaves—that's all. Now, d'ye see what I'm drivin' at? Put a man like you or me in a position where we've got the confidence of everybody everybody, understand—and say, when the time comes to get away with a few hundred thousand, d'ye think they'd get *us?* But to do that thing a man's got to make a reputation, an' it takes years to make it.

"Dawson," he said, as he drew his chair nearer, "it'll be ten years afore your old man gets out. I'm goin' to sit down an' wait for him. I got about sixteen thousand saved out o' that last thing—the one I went up for—an' I'm goin' to wait, an' in the meantime I'm goin' to put you in a place where you can build up a reputation an' get the confidence of the community; an' when the old man gets out, if we can't light out o' here with six figures, you can count me out, that's all. There's just one place in the whole world we can go then and be safe."

"And that place?" said the younger man.

Sutcliffe drew his head down and whispered in his ear. The younger man smote the table with his hand. "Great Scott!" he exclaimed, with a note of intense admiration in his voice. "Great Scott! Sutcliffe, I never thought of that."

"First and foremost, Dawson," said the former, "is there anything agin' you? Nothing to live down? Is there anythin' that you been mixed up in?"

"Nothing at all," said Dawson. "The old man kept me out of it until——"

"How about education?" interrupted Sutcliffe.

"Pretty fair," said the other. "It's good enough. As far as that goes, I'll do, all right."

"Then, by George!" exclaimed Sutcliffe, "it's done."

"Now, John Dawson, sit down and listen to me. This is most particular business. Back here across the river is this here town of Monroe. Town? Say, it's a city, or pretty near it. I know that town from one end to the other, and the devil of it all is, the town knows me. There's more money an' more business in that town for its size than there is in any other town in the United States. Now, I'll tell you what I'm goin' to do. I'm goin' to stake you to the tune of about five hundred to start with. You will go and drop down on that town from nowhere in particular. You're goin' to start up a small hardware business in a vacant store at No. 41, Main Street. No matter why. I know what I'm about, an' I know just how to work it. I know who owns the store, but you'll find out that for yourself. You rent that store for a year and pay him cash three months in advance. You inquire around an' pick out a good cheap boardin'-place, suited to a man without any money to spare. You'll want to stock up your store. You'll go to a man whose name you'll know when you get there. Don't pay a cent of money except to the owner of the store an' your landlady. Everything else you get in that town you want to get on credit."

"How'll I work that?" queried the younger man.

"I'm comin' to that, young fellow. There's just one man there who doesn't dare to refuse to do me a good turn. I did him one—but that's another story. That's the cashier of the First National. You give him this note. Wait a minute."

He took out a sheet of paper and wrote. He tossed the paper upon the table. It read—

"VAN SLYCK,—The man who hands you this is an honest man. When he needs references, give them to him.

"Yours, No. 356×."

"That'll fix it. Deposit your money in his bank. And then——"

"But what's the use of asking credit if I have the money?" protested Dawson.

"Confound it! Can't you see that the only way to get a standing in a place is to

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ask credit? The man that pays cash can't get any credit. You order a small bill of goods on thirty days, an' on the last day, neither sooner nor later, you pay for 'em. You give your note for fifty dollars you borrow, and when it's due, not a day sooner or later, pay it back. That's the start. The time comes when you can borrow five, ten, twenty thousand on the name you've got. The more money you borrow, the more credit you ask, the better standing you'll have. That's the ticket. Now here. I know all about the hardware business, an' I know just why it'll go over there, an' I'll go over the details of the thing with you to-morrow before you start in. You want sleep—that's what you want. But, Dawson, see here, let me tell you this, now and for all. Never, under any circumstances, be seen with me. Never write me a letter. Never recognise me on the street. Never mention my name. By George! that's vital. We've got to play this game accordin' to the cards. When you need money, you report to me here. You report here every three months anyway, an' we'll talk things over. But outside o' that, never have nothin' to do with me one way or the other. And, Dawson," he concluded as he rose, "until the time comes, an' I say the word, don't forget that honesty's the best policy. This is a deep and wide game we're goin' to play, an' you've got to be as honest as the day is long. Don't forget it, Dawson; don't forget it."

"'How are you, Alderman?'"

Dawson turned in and slept for sixteen hours.

* * * * *

"This fellow out here," said the salesman to the wholesaler, "wants this small bill of goods on credit. He says he's started up a small place on Main Street. What do you think about it?"

"Where is he?" said the proprietor, getting up and looking through the glass partition. "Oh! is that the fellow? Looks honest enough. Any references?"

"Only Cassidy, the owner of the place, and Van Slyck, of the First National."

"Call 'em up, then, and I'll talk to them."

"Seems to be all right," he said, after an interval of five minutes. "I guess he can have them. Don't sell him any more, though, unless you see me about it."

Of course, nobody but the people that Dawson dealt with ever bothered about him. He went on, slowly at first, as was natural.

"You don't borrow enough money," said Sutcliffe, at the end of the first three months, "and buy more goods on credit."

"But," said the younger man, "I don't need the money and I don't want the goods."

"Never you mind," said Sutcliffe. "What you want to do is to borrow. Borrow it and put in the bank, an' then pay it back. Give your note. Let your paper float around. And people'll begin to know you. That's what's you want. But always pay when due. Be sure about that. As for goods, I've found a way to create a demand for those. You go and see the Mayor, an' ask him for some small orders from the town. The man that he'll refer you to will give you an order. See if he don't."

Sutcliffe was right. Whenever Dawson saw that man, he got the order. The man himself didn't know why, but his immediate superior did. And Dawson didn't care why, so long as the demand came in.

Five years later, John Dawson stepped into the office of the president of the First National.

"How are you, Alderman?" said the latter cordially. "What can I do for you? What is it now, eh?"

"Mr. Breslin," said John Dawson, "I want

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to enlarge my place over there still more, but this architectural iron business I've got takes a good deal of my money. I need just about thirteen thousand dollars for ninety days. The question is, can you let me have it?"

"Dawson, there isn't a man in town that we'd sooner lend thirteen thousand dollars or any amount of money to, than to you. Of course you can have it."

"I didn't know," replied Dawson uncertainly.

* * * * *

It was the eighth year of the compact between Sutcliffe and Dawson, and in the year of our Lord 18—.

It was in the fall of the year, and the town of Monroe was in the throes of a mighty pre-election contest.

"Gentlemen—fellow-citizens," shouted the chairman of the meeting in the Town Hall, "there's not a man or woman within the sound of my voice—there's not a man or woman in this town that cannot say with me to-night, in all sincerity and truth, with the absolute conviction that he or she is everlastingly right—there's not a man or woman that cannot say with me to-night—Honest John Dawson!"

"Hooray!" yelled the crowd.

"Hooray!" yelled Sutcliffe with the crowd.

"I say, is there one?—in the whole wide world is there one such man or woman?"

"No! No! No!" yelled the crowd.

And "No! No! No!" yelled Sutcliffe.

"Ladies and gentlemen," continued the chairman, "it is my privilege, and I have the honour to introduce to you, the citizens of the old, old town of Monroe--now the glorious new city of Monroe--I introduce to you to-night the man who, by the grace of God, and the votes of the Republican party, shall be and must be the next treasurer of the great city of Monroe. I introduce to you, ladies and gentlemen, the man known here, there, and everywhere, in town and country, as John Dawson, the Honest Man!"

"Hi! Hi! Hi! 'Ray! 'Ray! 'Ray!" yelled the crowd.

"Three cheers for the Honest Man!" yelled Sutcliffe, and Pandemonium broke loose.

* * * * *

"Two more years," said Sutcliffe to himself that night. Two years more. And then——"

* * * * *

The city of Monroe was upon the top wave of prosperity. It had wakened up from a conservative business town of the old style into a great city of modern enterprise. New public buildings were being built, public parks were being laid out, bonds were being issued. Enormous sums of money were being poured into the city's treasury, more than ever before; far beyond the amount of the treasurer's bond. The money was lying there to meet the vast public improvements that were being made.

"It's a good thing," the people said, "that we've got John Dawson in charge of all that pile. He's honest as the day is long. He's the right man in the right place. That's clear!"

* * * * *

"Dawson," said Sutcliffe, "in three months' time the old man'll be out. In three months. I've got everything—everything, mind, down to the smallest detail—arranged and in order. We'll leave on a Saturday night for you know where, and that'll give us thirty-six

"'I introduce to you, ladies and gentlemen, the man known here, there, and everywhere as John Dawson, the Honest Man!'"

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"'Sutcliffe, look here, I can't do this thing.'"

bulky package on the table. He remained standing. Suddenly he addressed the other man.

"Sutcliffe," he said earnestly, "look here, I can't do this thing. I've got to back out. There isn't a man, woman, or child in Monroe that doesn't trust me to the end

hours' start. Hell itself can't catch us with that start. Now, as far as you're concerned. In three months' time—I've estimated that in about three months from now you can lay your hands on something over two hundred and fifty thousand dollars."

"Sutcliffe," said Dawson, with a grim smile, "in three months from now I can lay hands on eight hundred thousand dollars, and not a cent less."

"By George!" said Sutcliffe, with a fierce joy. "By George! we've struck it. I didn't think you had it in you, Dawson," he said, with a glance of admiration. "Honest, now, I didn't."

* * * * *

Three months later, Sutcliffe, the swindler, sat waiting in the little room behind the bar, at Steve O'Donnell's.

He raised his head. A man stood in the doorway.

"Here at last, Honest John Dawson," he exclaimed. "I've been awaitin' for you. Come in. Have you got it?"

"I have," said Dawson, as he laid down a I know," he said simply, "that it isn't right or fair to you to take this stand; but, Sutcliffe, you've taught me to be an honest man, you've built up a reputation for me, and I can't go back on it. I can't do it. There's no use. I'd do this thing if I could, Sutcliffe, but I can't."

The elder man was silent for an instant; then he stretched out his hand.

"Shake!" he exclaimed. "John Dawson," he said huskily, "there's more than that to it, and it's just this. You've made an honest man of me. By Heaven, you have!"

They stayed there for some minutes. Suddenly Sutcliffe roused himself.

"Say, Dawson, the old man'll be here in a minute. He's due here now. What'll we do with him, I wonder?"

"We'll have to make an honest man of him, too," said Dawson; "that's all there's left for us to do."

"Lord!" exclaimed Sutcliffe, with a grim and retrospective smile, "it'll be a sure enough tough job, but I guess we've got to do it, after all."

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TOMMY & CO.

By JEROME K. JEROME.*

No. VI.—DICK DANVERS COMES TO LIFE.

ILLIAM CLODD, mopping his brow, laid down the screwdriver and, stepping back, regarded the result of his labours with evident satisfaction.

"It looks like a bookcase," said William Clodd. "You might sit in the room for half an hour and never know it wasn't a bookcase."

What William Clodd had accomplished was this: he had had prepared, after his own design, what appeared to be four shelves laden with works suggestive of thought and erudition. As a matter of fact, it was not a bookcase, but merely a flat board, the books merely the backs of volumes that had long since found their way into the paper-mill. This artful deception William Clodd had screwed upon a cottage piano standing in the corner of the editorial office of *Good Humour*. Half-a-dozen real volumes piled upon the top of the piano completed the illusion. As William Clodd had proudly remarked, a casual visitor might easily have been deceived.

"If you had to sit in the room while she was practising mixed scales, you'd be quickly undeceived," said the editor of *Good Humour*, one Peter Hope. He spoke bitterly.

"You are not always in," explained Clodd. "There must be hours when she is here alone, with nothing else to do. Besides, you will get used to it after a while."

"You, I notice, don't try to get used to it," snarled Peter Hope. "You always go out the moment she commences."

"A friend of mine," continued William Clodd, "worked in an office over a piano-shop for seven years, and when the shop closed it nearly ruined his business; couldn't settle down to work for want of it."

"Why doesn't he come here?" asked Peter Hope. "The floor above is vacant."

"Can't," explained William Clodd. "He's dead."

"I can quite believe it," commented Peter Hope.

"It was a shop where people came and practised, paying sixpence an hour, and he had got to like it—said it made a cheerful background to his thoughts. Wonderful what you can get accustomed to."

"What's the good of it?" demanded Peter Hope.

"What's the good of it!" retorted William Clodd indignantly. "Every girl ought to know how to play the piano. A nice thing if when her lover asks her to play something to him——"

"I wonder you don't start a matrimonial agency," sneered Peter Hope. "Love and marriage—you think of nothing else."

"When you are bringing up a young girl——" argued Clodd.

"But you're not," interrupted Peter; "that's just what I'm trying to get out of your head. It is I who am bringing her up. And between ourselves, I wish you wouldn't interfere so much."

"You are not fit to bring up a girl."

"I've brought her up for seven years without your help. She's my adopted daughter, not yours. I do wish people would learn to mind their own business."

"You've done very well——"

"Thank you," said Peter Hope sarcastically. "It's very kind of you. Perhaps, when you've time, you'll write me out a testimonial."

"—up till now," concluded the imperturbable Clodd. "A girl of eighteen wants to know something else besides mathematics and the classics. You don't understand them."

"I do understand them," asserted Peter Hope. "What do you know about them? You're not a father."

"You've done your best," admitted William Clodd in a tone of patronage that irritated Peter greatly; "but you're a dreamer, you don't know the world. The time is coming when the girl will have to think of a husband."

"There's no need for her to think of a husband, not for years," retorted Peter Hope.

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"And even when she does, is strumming on the piano going to help her?"

"I tink—I tink," said Dr. Smith, who had hitherto remained a silent listener, "our young frent Clodd is right. You haf never quite got over your idea dat she was going to be a boy. You haf taught her de tings a boy should know."

"You cut her hair," added Clodd.

"I don't," snapped Peter.

"You let her have it cut—it's the same thing. At eighteen she knows more about the ancient Greeks and Romans than she does about her own frocks."

"De young girl," argued the Doctor, "what is she? De flower dat makes bright for us de garden of life, de gurgling brook dat murmurs by de dusty highway, de cheerful fire——"

"She can't be all of them," snapped Peter, who was a stickler for style. "Do keep to one simile at a time."

"Now, you listen to plain sense," said William Clodd. "You want—we all want the girl to be a success all round."

"I want her——" Peter Hope was rummaging among the litter on the desk. It certainly was not there. Peter pulled out a drawer—two drawers. "I wish," said Peter Hope, "I wish sometimes she wasn't quite so clever."

The old doctor rummaged among dusty files of papers in a corner. Clodd found it on the mantelpiece concealed beneath the hollow foot of a big brass candlestick, and handed it to Peter.

"Peter had one vice."

Peter had one vice—the taking in increasing quantities of snuff, which was harmful for him, as he himself admitted. Tommy, sympathetic to most masculine frailties, was severe, however, upon this one.

"You spill it upon your shirt and on your coat," had argued Tommy. "I like to see you always neat. Besides, it isn't a nice habit. I do wish, dad, you'd give it up."

"I must," Peter had agreed. "I'll break myself of it. But not all at once—it would be a wrench; by degrees, Tommy, by degrees."

So a compromise had been compounded. Tommy was to hide the snuff-box. It was to be somewhere in the room and to be accessible, but that was all. Peter, when self-control had reached the breaking-point, might try and find it. Occasionally, luck helping Peter, he would find it early in the day, when he would earn his own bitter self-reproaches by indulging in quite an orgy. But more often Tommy's artfulness was such that he would be compelled, by want of time, to abandon the search. Tommy always knew when he had failed, by the air of indignant resignation with which he would greet her on her return. Then perhaps towards evening, Peter, looking up, would see the box open before his nose, with, above it, a pair of reproving black eyes, their severity counterbalanced by a pair of full, red lips trying not to smile. And Peter, knowing that only one pinch would be permitted, would dip deeply.

"I want her," said Peter Hope, feeling with his snuff-box in his hand more confidence in his own judgment, "to be a sensible, clever woman, capable of earning her own living and of being independent; not a mere helpless doll, crying for some man to come and take care of her."

"A woman's business," asserted Clodd, "is to be taken care of."

"Some women, perhaps," admitted Peter; "but Tommy, you know very well, is not going to be the ordinary type of woman. She has brains; she will make her way in the world."

"It doesn't depend upon brains," said Clodd. "She hasn't got the elbows."

"The elbows?"

"They are not sharp enough. The last

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'bus home on a wet night tells you whether a woman is capable of pushing her own way in the world. Tommy's the sort to get left on the kerb."

"She's the sort," retorted Peter, "to make a name for herself and to be able to afford a cab. Don't you bully me!" Peter sniffed self-assertiveness from between his thumb and finger.

"Yes, I shall," Clodd told him, "on this particular point. The poor girl's got no mother."

Fortunately for the general harmony the door opened at the moment to admit the subject of discussion.

"Got that *Daisy Blossom* advertisement out of old Blatchley," announced Tommy, waving triumphantly a piece of paper over her head.

"No!" exclaimed Peter. "How did you manage it?"

"Asked him for it," was Tommy's explanation.

"Very odd," mused Peter; "asked the old idiot for it myself only last week. He refused it point-blank."

Clodd snorted reproof. "You know I don't like your doing that sort of thing. It isn't proper for a young girl——"

"It's all right," assured him Tommy; "he's bald!"

"That makes no difference," was Clodd's opinion.

"Yes, it does," was Tommy's. "I like them bald."

Tommy took Peter's head between her hands and kissed it, and in doing so noticed the tell-tale specks of snuff.

"Just a pinch, my dear," explained Peter, "the merest pinch."

Tommy took up the snuff-box from the desk. "I'll show you where I'm going to put it this time." She put it in her pocket. Peter's face fell.

"What do you think of it?" said Clodd. He led her to the corner. "Good idea, ain't it?"

"Why, where's the piano?" demanded Tommy.

Clodd turned in delighted triumph to the others.

"Humbug!" growled Peter.

"It isn't humbug," cried Clodd indignantly. "She thought it was a bookcase—anybody would. You'll be able to sit there and practise by the hour," explained Clodd to Tommy. "When you hear anybody coming up the stairs, you can leave off."

"How can she hear anything when she——" A bright idea occurred to Peter. "Don't you think, Clodd, as a practical man," suggested Peter insinuatingly, adopting the Socratic method, "that if we got her one of those dummy pianos—you know what I mean; it's just like an ordinary piano, only you don't hear it?"

Clodd shook his head. "No good at all. Can't tell the effect she is producing."

"Quite so. Then, on the other hand, Clodd, don't you think that hearing the effect they are producing may sometimes discourage the beginner?"

Clodd's opinion was that such discouragement was a thing to be battled with.

Tommy, who had seated herself, commenced a scale in contrary motion.

"Well, I'm going across to the printer's now," explained Clodd, taking up his hat. "Got an appointment with young Grindley at three. You stick to it. A spare half-hour now and then that you never miss does wonders. You've got it in you." With these encouraging remarks to Tommy, Clodd disappeared.

"Easy for him," muttered Peter bitterly. "Always does have an appointment outside the moment she begins."

Tommy appeared to be throwing her very soul into the performance. Passers-by in Crane Court paused, regarded the first-floor windows of the publishing and editorial offices of *Good Humour* with troubled looks, then hurried on.

"She has—remarkably firm touch!" shouted the Doctor into Peter's ear. "Will see you—evening. Someting—say to you."

The fat little doctor took his hat and departed. Tommy, ceasing suddenly, came over and seated herself on the arm of Peter's chair.

"Feeling grumpy?" asked Tommy.

"It isn't," explained Peter, "that I mind the noise. I'd put up with that if I could see the good of it."

"It's going to help me to get a husband, dad. Seems to me an odd way of doing it; but Billy says so, and Billy knows all about everything."

"I can't understand you, a sensible girl, listening to such nonsense," said Peter. "It's that which troubles me."

"Dad, where are your wits?" demanded Tommy. "Isn't Billy acting like a brick? Why, he could go into Fleet Street to half-a-dozen other papers and make five hundred a year as advertising agent—you know he could. But he doesn't. He sticks to us.

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If my making myself ridiculous with that tin pot they persuaded him was a piano is going to please him, isn't it common sense and sound business, to say nothing of good nature and gratitude, for me to do it? Dad, I've got a surprise for him. Listen." And Tommy, springing from the arm of Peter's chair, returned to the piano.

"What was it?" questioned Tommy, having finished. "Could you recognise it?"

"I think," said Peter, "it sounded like—— It wasn't 'Home, Sweet Home,' was it?"

Tommy clapped her hands. "Yes, it was. You'll end by liking it yourself, dad. We'll have musical 'At Homes.'"

"Tommy, have I brought you up properly, do you think?"

"No, dad, you haven't. You have let me have my own way too much. You know the proverb: 'Good mothers make bad daughters.' Clodd's right; you've spoilt me, dad. Do you remember, dad, when I first came to you, seven years ago, a ragged little brat out of the streets, that didn't know itself whether 'twas a boy or a girl? Do you know what I thought to myself the moment I set eyes on you? 'Here's a soft old Juggins; I'll be all right if I can get in here!' It makes you smart, knocking about in the gutters and being knocked about; you read faces quickly."

"Do you remember your cooking, Tommy? You 'had an aptitude for it,' according to your own idea."

Tommy laughed. "I wonder how you stood it."

"You were so obstinate. You came to me as 'cook and housekeeper,' and as cook and housekeeper, and as nothing else, would you remain. If I suggested any change, up would go your chin into the air. I dared not even dine out too often, you were such a little tyrant. The only thing you were always ready to do, if I wasn't satisfied, was to march out of the house and leave me. Wherever did you get that savage independence of yours?"

"I don't know. I think it must have been from a woman—perhaps she was my mother; I don't know—who used to sit up in the bed and cough, all night it seemed to me. People would come to see us—ladies in fine clothes, and gentlemen with oily hair. I think they wanted to help us. Many of them had kind voices. But always a hard look would come into her face, and she would tell them what even then I knew to be untrue—it was one of the first things I can recollect—that we had everything we wanted, that we needed no help from anyone. They would go away, shrugging their shoulders. I grew up with the feeling that seemed to have been burnt into my brain, that to take from anybody anything you had not earned was shameful. I don't think I could do it even now, not even from you. I am useful to you, dad—I do help you?"

There had crept a terror into Tommy's voice. Peter felt the little hands upon his arm trembling.

"Help me? Why, you work like a nigger—like a nigger is supposed to work, but doesn't. No one—whatever we paid him—would do half as much. I don't want to make your head more swollen than it is, young woman, but you have talent; I am not sure it is not genius." Peter felt the little hands tighten upon his arm.

"I do want this paper to be a success; that is why I strum upon the piano to please Clodd. Is it humbug?"

"I am afraid it is; but humbug is the sweet oil that helps this whirling world of ours to spin round smoothly. Too much of it cloys: we drop it very gently.

"But you are sure it is only humbug, Tommy?" It was Peter's voice into which fear had entered now. "It is not that you think he understands you better than I do—would do more for you?"

"You want me to tell you all I think of you, and that isn't good for you, dad—not too often. It would be you who would have swelled head then."

"I am jealous, Tommy, jealous of everyone that comes near you. Life is a tragedy for us old folks. We know there must come a day when you will leave the nest, leave us voiceless, ridiculous, flitting among bare branches. You will understand later, when you have children of your own. This foolish talk about a husband! It is worse for a man than it is for the woman. The mother lives again in her child: the man is robbed of all."

"Dad, do you know how old I am?—that you are talking terrible nonsense?"

"He will come, little girl."

"Yes," answered Tommy, "I suppose he will; but not for a long while—oh, not for a very long while. Don't. It frightens me."

"You? Why should it frighten you?"

"The pain. It makes me feel a coward. I want it to come; I want to taste life, to drain the whole cup, to understand, to feel. But that is the boy in me: I am more than half a boy, I always have been. But the woman in me: it shrinks from the ordeal."

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"You talk, Tommy, as if love were something terrible."

"There are all things in it; I feel it, dad. It is life in a single draught. It frightens me."

The child was standing with her face hidden behind her hands. Old Peter, always very bad at lying, stood silent, not knowing what consolation to concoct. The shadow passed, and Tommy's laughing eyes looked out again.

"Haven't you anything to do, dad—outside, I mean?"

"You want to get rid of me?"

"Well, I've nothing else to occupy me till the proofs come in. I'm going to practise, hard."

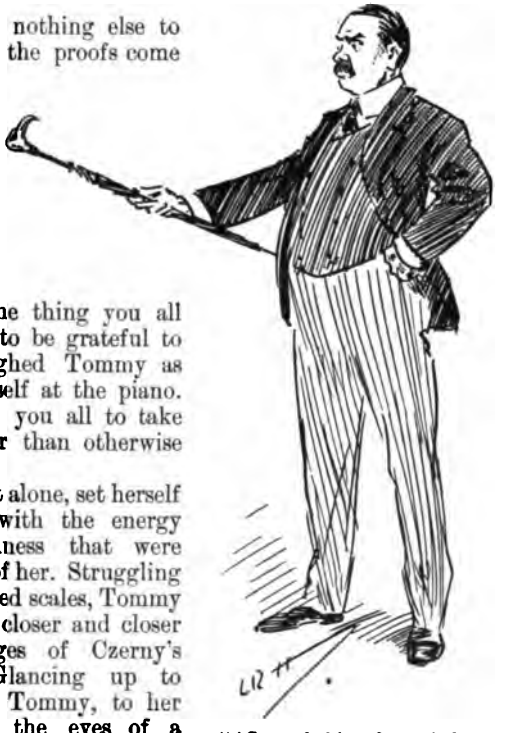
"I think I'll turn over my article on the Embankment," said Peter.

"There's one thing you all of you ought to be grateful to me for," laughed Tommy as she seated herself at the piano. "I do induce you all to take more fresh air than otherwise you would."

Tommy, left alone, set herself to her task with the energy and thoroughness that were characteristic of her. Struggling with complicated scales, Tommy bent her eyes closer and closer over the pages of Czerny's Exercises. Glancing up to turn a page, Tommy, to her surprise, met the eyes of a stranger. They were brown eyes, their expression sympathetic. Below them, looking golden with the sunlight falling on it, was a moustache and beard cut short in Vandyke fashion, not altogether hiding a pleasant mouth, about the corners of which lurked a smile.

"I beg your pardon," said the stranger. "I knocked three times. Perhaps you did not hear me."

"No, I didn't," confessed Tommy, closing the book of Czerny's Exercises and rising with chin at an angle that to anyone acquainted with the chart of Tommy's temperament might have suggested the advisability of seeking shelter.



"'Sort of thing for a dude in a pantomime!'"

"This is the editorial office of *Good Humour*, is it not?" inquired the stranger.

"It is."

"Is the editor in?"

"The editor is out."

"The sub-editor?" suggested the stranger.

"I am the sub-editor."

The stranger raised his eyebrows. Tommy, on the contrary, lowered hers.

"Would you mind glancing through that?" The stranger drew from his pocket a folded manuscript. "It will not take you a moment. I ought, of course, to have sent it through the post; but I am so tired of sending things through the post."

The stranger's manner was compounded of dignified impudence combined with pathetic humility. His eyes both challenged and pleaded. Tommy held out her hand for the paper and retired with it behind the protection of the big editorial desk that, flanked on one side by a screen and on the other by a formidable revolving bookcase, stretched fortress-like across the narrow room. The stranger remained standing.

"Yes. It's pretty," criticised the sub-editor. "Worth printing, perhaps; not worth paying for."

"Not merely a—a nominal sum, sufficient to distinguish it from the work of the amateur?"

Tommy pursed her lips. "Poetry is quite a drug in the market. We can get as much as we want of it for nothing."

"Say half-a-crown," suggested the stranger.

Tommy shot a swift glance across the desk and for the first time saw the whole of him. He was clad in a threadbare, long, brown ulster—long, that is, it would have been upon an ordinary man, but the stranger happening to be remarkably tall, it appeared on him ridiculously short, reaching only to his knees. Round his neck and tucked into his waistcoat, thus completely hiding the shirt and collar he may have been wearing or may not, was carefully arranged a blue silk muffler. His hands, which were bare, looked blue and cold. Yet the black frock-coat and waistcoat and French grey trousers

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bore the unmistakable cut of a first-class tailor and fitted him to perfection. His hat, which he had rested on the desk, shone resplendent, and the handle of his silk umbrella was an eagle's head in gold, with two small rubies for the eyes.

"You can leave it if you like," consented Tommy. "I'll speak to the editor about it when he returns."

"You won't forget it?" urged the stranger.

"No," answered Tommy, "I shall not forget it." Her black eyes were fixed upon the stranger without her being aware of it. She had dropped unconsciously into her "stocktaking" attitude.

"Thank you very much," said the stranger. "I will call again to-morrow."

The stranger, moving backward to the door, went out. Tommy sat with her face between her hands. Czerny's Exercises lay neglected.

"Anybody called?" asked Peter Hope.

"No," answered Tommy. "Oh, just a man. Left this—not bad."

"The old story," mused Peter, as he unfolded the manuscript. "We all of us begin with poetry. Then we take to prose romances; poetry doesn't pay. Finally, we write articles: 'How to be Happy though Married,' 'What shall we do with our Daughters?' It is life summarised. What is it all about?"

"Oh, the usual sort of thing," explained Tommy. "He wants half-a-crown for it."

"Poor devil! Let him have it."

"That's not business," growled Tommy.

"Nobody will ever know," said Peter. "We'll enter it as 'telegrams.'"

The stranger called early the next day, pocketed his half-crown, and left another manuscript—an essay. Also he left behind him his gold-handled umbrella, taking away with him instead an old alpaca thing Clodd kept in reserve for exceptionally dirty weather. Peter pronounced the essay usable.

"He has a style," said Peter; "he writes with distinction. Make an appointment for me with him."

Clodd, on missing his umbrella, was indignant. "What's the good of this thing to me?" commented Clodd. "Sort of thing for a dude in a pantomime! The fellow must be a blithering ass!"

Tommy gave to the stranger messages from both when next he called. He appeared more grieved than surprised concerning the umbrellas.

"You don't think Mr. Clodd would like to keep this umbrella in exchange for his own?" he suggested.

"Hardly his style," explained Tommy.

"It's very peculiar," said the stranger, with a smile. "I have been trying to get rid of this umbrella for the last three weeks. Once upon a time, when I preferred to keep my own umbrella, people used to take it by mistake, leaving all kinds of shabby things behind them in exchange. Now, when I'd really like to get quit of it, nobody will have it."

"Why do you want to get rid of it?" asked Tommy. "It looks a very good umbrella."

"You don't know how it hampers me," said the stranger. "I have to live up to it. It requires a certain amount of resolution to enter a cheap restaurant accompanied by that umbrella. When I do, the waiters draw my attention to the most expensive dishes and recommend me special brands of their so-called champagne. They seem quite surprised if I only want a chop and a glass of beer. I haven't always got the courage to disappoint them. It is really becoming quite a curse to me. If I use it to stop a 'bus, three or four hansoms dash up and quarrel over me. I can't do anything I want to do. I want to live simply and inexpensively: it will not let me."

Tommy laughed. "Can't you lose it?"

The stranger laughed also. "Lose it! You have no idea how honest people are. I hadn't myself. The whole world has gone up in my estimation within the last few weeks. People run after me for quite long distances and force it into my hand—people on rainy days who haven't got umbrellas of their own. It is the same with this hat." The stranger sighed as he took it up. "I am always trying to get off with something reasonably shabby in exchange for it. I am always found out and stopped."

"Why don't you pawn them?" suggested the practicable Tommy.

The stranger regarded her with admiration. "Do you know, I never thought of that," said the stranger. "Of course. What a good idea! Thank you so much."

The stranger departed, evidently much relieved.

"Silly fellow!" mused Tommy. "They won't give him a quarter of the value, and he will say: 'Thank you so much,' and be quite contented." It worried Tommy a good deal that day, the thought of that stranger's helplessness.

The stranger's name was Richard Danvers.

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He lived the other side of Holborn, in Featherstone Buildings, but much of his time came to be spent in the offices of *Good Humour*.

Peter liked him. "Full of promise," was Peter's opinion. "His criticism of that article of mine on 'The Education of Woman' showed both sense and feeling. A scholar and a thinker."

Flipp, the office-boy (spelt Philip), liked him; and Flipp's attitude, in general, was censorial. "He's all right," pronounced Flipp; "nothing stuck-up about him. He's got plenty of sense, lying hidden away."

Miss Ramsbotham liked him. "The men—the men we think about at all," explained Miss Ramsbotham—"may be divided into two classes: the men we ought to like, but don't; and the men there is no particular reason for our liking, but that we do. Personally I could get very fond of your friend Dick. There is nothing whatever attractive about him, except himself."

Even Tommy liked him in her way, though at times she was severe with him.

"If you mean a big street," grumbled Tommy, who was going over proofs, "why not say a big street? Why must you always call it a 'main artery'?"

"I am sorry," apologised Danvers. "It is not my own idea. You told me to study the higher-class journals."

"I didn't tell you to select and follow all their faults. Here it is again. Your crowd is always a 'hydra-headed monster'; your tea, 'the cup that cheers but not inebriates.'"

"I am afraid I'm a deal of trouble to you," feared the staff.

"I am afraid you are," agreed the sub-editor.

"Don't give me up," pleaded the staff. "I misunderstood you, that is all. I will write English for the future."

"Shall be glad if you will," growled the sub-editor.

Dick Danvers rose. "I am so anxious not to get what you call 'the sack' from here."

The sub-editor, mollified, thought the staff need be under no apprehension, provided it showed itself teachable.

"I have been rather a worthless fellow, Miss Hope," confessed Dick Danvers. "I was beginning to despair of myself till I came across you and your father. The atmosphere here—I don't mean the material atmosphere of Crane Court—is so invigorating: its simplicity, its sincerity. I used to have ideals. I tried to stifle them. There is a set that sneers at all that sort of thing. Now I see that they are good. You will help me?"

Every woman is a mother. Tommy felt for the moment that she wanted to take this big boy on her knee and talk to him for his good. He was only an overgrown lad. But so exceedingly overgrown! Tommy had to content herself with holding out her hand. Dick Danvers grasped it tightly.

Clodd was the only one who did not approve of him. "How did you get hold of him?" asked Clodd one afternoon, he and Peter alone in the office.

"He came. He came in the usual way," explained Peter.

"What do you know about him?"

"Nothing. What is there to know? One doesn't ask for a character with a journalist."

"No, I suppose that wouldn't work. Found out anything about him since?"

"Nothing against him. Why so suspicious of everybody?"

"Because you are just a woolly lamb and want a dog to look after you. Who is he? On a first night he gives away his stall and sneaks into the pit. When you send him to a picture-gallery, he dodges the private view and goes on the first shilling day. If an invitation comes to a public dinner, he asks me to go and eat it for him and tell him what it's all about. That doesn't suggest the frank and honest journalist, does it?"

"It is unusual, it certainly is unusual," Peter was bound to admit.

"I distrust the man," said Clodd. "He's not our class. What is he doing here?"

"I will ask him, Clodd; I will ask him straight out."

"And believe whatever he tells you."

"No, I shan't."

"Then what's the good of asking him?"

"Well, what am I to do?" demanded the bewildered Peter.

"Get rid of him," suggested Clodd.

"Get rid of him?"

"Get him away! Don't have him in and out of the office all day long—looking at her with those collie-dog eyes of his, arguing art and poetry with her in that cushat-dove voice of his. Get him clean away—if it isn't too late already."

"Nonsense," said Peter, who had turned white, however. "She's not that sort of girl."

"Not that sort of girl!" Clodd had no patience with Peter Hope, and told him so. "Why are there never inkstains on her

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fingers now? There used to be. Why does she always keep a lemon in her drawer. When did she last have her hair cut? I'll tell you if you care to know—five months ago, the week before he came. She used to have it cut once a fortnight: said it tickled her neck. Why does she jump on people when they call her Tommy and tell them that her name is Jane. It never used to be Jane. Maybe when you're a bit older you'll begin to notice things for yourself."

Clodd jammed his hat upon his head and flung himself down the stairs. Peter, slipping out a minute later, bought himself an ounce of snuff.

"Fiddle-de-dee!" said Peter as he helped himself to his thirteenth pinch. "Don't believe it. I'll sound her. I shan't say a word—I'll just sound her."

Peter stood with his back to the fire. Tommy sat at her desk, correcting proofs of a fanciful story: "The Man Without a Past."

"I shall miss him," said Peter; "I know I shall."

"Miss whom?" demanded Tommy.

"Danvers," sighed Peter. "It always happens so. You get friendly with a man; then he goes away—abroad, back to America, Heaven knows where. You never see him again."

Tommy looked up. There was trouble in her face.

"How do you spell 'harassed'?" questioned Tommy; "two 'r's' or one?"

"One 'r,'" Peter informed her, "two 's's.'"

"I thought so." The trouble passed from Tommy's face.

"You don't ask when he's going, you don't ask where he's going," complained Peter. "You don't seem to be interested in the least."

"I was going to ask, so soon as I had finished correcting this sheet," explained Tommy. "What reason does he give?"

Peter had crossed over and was standing where he could see her face illumined by the lamplight.

"It doesn't upset you—the thought of his going away, of you're never seeing him again?"

"Why should it?" Tommy answered his searching gaze with a slightly puzzled look. "Of course, I'm sorry. He was becoming useful. But we couldn't expect him to stop with us always, could we?"

Peter, rubbing his hands, broke into a chuckle. "I told him 'twas all fiddlesticks. Clodd, he would have it you were growing to care for the fellow."

"For Dick Danvers!" Tommy laughed. "Whatever put that into his head?"

"Oh, well, there were one or two little things that we had noticed."

"We?"

"I mean that Clodd had noticed."

I'm glad it was Clodd that noticed them, not you, dad, thought Tommy to herself. They'd have been pretty obvious if you had noticed them.

"It naturally made me anxious," confessed Peter. "You see, we know absolutely nothing of the fellow."

"Absolutely nothing," agreed Tommy.

"He may be a man of the highest integrity. Personally I think he is. I like him. On the other hand, he may be a thorough-paced scoundrel. I don't believe for a moment that he is, but he may be. Impossible to say."

"Quite impossible," agreed Tommy.

"Considered merely as a journalist, it doesn't matter. He writes well. He has brains. There's an end of it."

"He is very painstaking," agreed Tommy.

"Personally," added Peter, "I like the fellow." Tommy had returned to her work.

Of what use was Peter in a crisis of this kind? Peter couldn't scold. Peter couldn't bully. The only person to talk to Tommy as Tommy knew she needed to be talked to was one Jane, a young woman of dignity with sense of the proprieties.

"I do hope that at least you are feeling ashamed of yourself," remarked Jane to Tommy that same night, as the twain sat together in their little bedroom.

"Done nothing to be ashamed of," growled Tommy.

"Making a fool of yourself openly, for everybody to notice."

"Clodd ain't everybody. He's got eyes at the back of his head. Sees things before they happen."

"Where's your woman's pride: falling in love with a man who has never spoken to you, except in terms of the most ordinary courtesy?"

"I'm not in love with him."

"A man about whom you know absolutely nothing."

"Not in love with him."

"Where does he come from? Who is he?"

"I don't know, don't care; nothing to do with me."

"Just because of his soft eyes, and his wheedling voice, and that half-caressing, half-devotional manner of his. Do you imagine

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he keeps it specially for you? I gave you credit for more sense."

"I'm not in love with him, I tell you. He's down on his luck, and I'm sorry for him, that's all."

"And if he is, whose fault was it, do you think?"

"It doesn't matter. We are none of us saints. He's trying to pull himself together, and I respect him for it. It's our duty to be charitable and kind to one another in this world!"

"Oh, well, I'll tell you how you can be kind to him: by pointing out to him that he is wasting his time. With his talents, now that he knows his business, he could be on the staff of some big paper, earning a good income. Put it nicely to him, but be firm. Insist on his going. That will be showing true kindness to him—and to yourself, too, I'm thinking, my dear."

And Tommy understood and appreciated the sound good sense underlying Jane's advice, and the very next day but one, seizing the first opportunity, acted upon it; and all would have gone as contemplated if only Dick Danvers had sat still and listened, as it had been arranged in Tommy's programme that he should.

"But I don't want to go," said Dick.

"But you ought to want to go. Staying here with us you are doing yourself no good."

He rose and came to where she stood with one foot upon the fender, looking down into the fire. His doing this disconcerted her. So long as he remained seated the other end of the room, she was the sub-editor counselling the staff for its own good. Now that she could not raise her eyes without encountering his, she felt painfully conscious of being nothing more important than a little woman who was trembling.

"It is doing me all the good in the world," he told her, "being near to you."

"Oh, please do sit down again," she urged him. "I can talk to you so much better when you're sitting down."

But he would not do anything he should have done that day. Instead he took her hands in his, and would not let them go; and the reason and the will went out of her, leaving her helpless.

"Let me be with you always," he pleaded. "It means the difference between light and darkness to me. You have done so much for me. Will you not finish your work? Will you not trust me? It is no hot passion that can pass away, my love for you. It springs from all that is best in me—from the part of me that is wholesome and joyous and strong, the part of me that belongs to you."

Releasing her, he turned away.

"The other part of me—the blackguard—it is dead, dear, dead and buried. I did not know I was a blackguard, I thought myself a fine fellow, till one day it came home to me. Suddenly I saw myself as I really was. And the sight of the thing frightened me and I ran away from it. I said to myself I would begin life afresh, in a new country, free of every tie that could bind me to the past. It would mean poverty—privation, maybe, in the beginning. What of that? The struggle would brace me. It would be good sport. Ah, well, you can guess the result: the awakening to the cold facts, the reaction of feeling. In what way was I worse than other men? Who was I, to play the prig in a world where others were laughing and dining? I had tramped your city till my boots were worn into holes. I had but to abandon my Quixotic ideals—return to where shame lay waiting for me, to be welcomed with the fatted calf. It would have ended so had I not chanced to pass by your door that afternoon and hear you strumming on the piano."

So Billy was right, after all, thought Tommy to herself, the piano does help.

"It was so incongruous—a piano in Crane Court—I looked to see where the noise came from. I read the name of the paper on the doorpost. 'It will be my last chance,' I said to myself. 'This shall decide it.'"

He came back to her. She had not moved. "I am not afraid to tell you all this. You are so big-hearted, so human; you will understand, you can forgive. It is all past. Loving you tells a man that he has done with evil. Will you not trust me?"

She put her hands in his. "I am trusting you," she said, "with all my life. Don't make a muddle of it, dear, if you can help it."

It was an odd wooing, as Tommy laughingly told herself when she came to think it over in her room that night. But that is how it shaped itself.

What troubled her most was that she had not been quite frank with Peter, so that Peter had to defend her against herself.

"I attacked you so suddenly," explained Peter, "you had not time to think. You acted from instinct. A woman seeks to hide her love even from herself."

"I expect, after all, I am more of a girl than a boy," feared Tommy: "I seem to have so many womanish failings."

Peter took himself into quiet places and

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trained himself to face the fact that another would be more to her than he had ever been, and Clodd went about his work like a bear with a sore head; but they neither of them need have troubled themselves so much. The marriage did not take place till nearly fifteen years had passed away, and much water had to flow beneath old London Bridge before that day.

The past is not easily got rid of. A tale was once written of a woman who killed her babe and buried it in a lonely wood, and later stole back in the night and saw there, white in the moonlight, a child's hand calling through the earth, and buried it again and yet again; but always that white baby hand called upwards through the earth, trample it down as she would. Tommy read the story one evening in an old miscellany, and sat long before the dead fire, the book open on her lap, and shivered; for now she knew the fear that had been haunting her.

Tommy lived expecting her. She came one night when Tommy was alone, working late in the office. Tommy knew her the moment she entered the door, a handsome woman, with snakelike, rustling skirts. She closed the door behind her, and drawing forward a chair, seated herself the other side of the desk, and the two looked long and anxiously at one another.

"They told me I should find you here alone," said the woman. "It is better, is it not?"

"Yes," said Tommy, "it is better."

"Tell me," said the woman, "are you very much in love with him?"

"Why should I tell you?"

"Because, if not—if you have merely accepted him thinking him a good catch—which he isn't, my dear; hasn't a penny to bless himself with, and never will if he marries you—why, then the matter is soon settled. They tell me you are a businesslike young lady, and I am prepared to make a businesslike proposition."

There was no answer. The woman shrugged her shoulders.

"If, on the other hand, you are that absurd creature, a young girl in love, why, then, I suppose, we shall have to fight for him."

"It would be more sporting, would it not?" suggested Tommy.

"Let me explain before you decide," continued the woman. "Dick Danvers left me six months ago, and has kept away from me ever since, because he loved me."

"It sounds a curious reason."

"I was a married woman when Dick Danvers and I first met. Since he left me—for my sake and his own—I have received information of my husband's death."

"And does Dick—does he know?" asked the girl.

"Not yet. I have only lately learnt the news myself."

"Then if it is as you say, when he knows, he will go back to you."

"There are difficulties in the way."

"What difficulties?"

"My dear, this. To try and forget me, he has been making love to you. Men do these things. I merely ask you to convince yourself of the truth. Go away for six months—disappear entirely. Leave him free—uninfluenced. If he loves you—if it be not merely a sense of honour that binds him—you will find him here on your return. If not—if in the interval I have succeeded in running off with him, well, is not the two or three thousand pounds I am prepared to put into this paper of yours a fair price for such a lover?"

Tommy rose with a laugh of genuine amusement. She could never altogether put aside her sense of humour, let Fate come with what terrifying face it would.

"You may have him for nothing—if he is that man," the girl told her; "he shall be free to choose between us."

"You mean you will release him from his engagement?"

"That is what I mean."

"Why not take my offer? You know the money is needed. It will save your father years of anxiety and struggle. Go away—travel, for a couple of months, if you're afraid of the six. Write him that you must be alone, to think things over."

The girl turned upon her.

"And leave you a free field to lie and trick?"

The woman, too, had risen. "Do you think he really cares for you? At the moment you interest him. At nineteen every woman is a mystery. When the mood is past—and do you know how long a man's mood lasts, you poor chit? Till he has caught what he is running after, and has tasted it—then he will think not of what he has won, but of what he has lost: of the society from which he has cut himself adrift; of all the old pleasures and pursuits he can no longer enjoy; of the luxuries—necessities to a man of his stamp—that marriage with you has deprived him of. Then your face will be a perpetual reminder to him of what he has

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"Always that white baby hand called upwards through the earth."

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paid for it, and he will curse it every time he sees it."

"You don't know him," the girl cried. "You know just a part of him—the part you would know. All the rest of him is a good man, that would rather his self-respect than all the luxuries you mention—you included."

"It seems to resolve itself into what manner of man he is," laughed the woman.

The girl looked at her watch. "He will be here shortly; he shall tell us himself."

"How do you mean?"

"That here, between the two of us, he shall decide—this very night." She showed her white face to the woman. "Do you think I could live through a second day like to this?"

"The scene would be ridiculous."

"There will be none here to enjoy the humour of it."

"He will not understand."

"Oh, yes, he will," the girl laughed. "Come, you have all the advantages: you are rich, you are clever; you belong to his class. If he elects to stop with me, it will be because he is my man—mine. Are you afraid?"

The woman shivered. She wrapped her fur cloak about her closer and sat down again, and Tommy returned to her proofs. It was press-night and there was much to be done.

He came a little later, though how long the time may have seemed to the two women one cannot say. They heard his footstep on the stair. The woman rose and went forward, so that when he opened the door she was the first he saw. But he made no sign. Possibly he had been schooling himself for this moment, knowing that sooner or later it must come. The woman held out her hand to him with a smile.

"I have not the honour," he said.

The smile died from her face. "I do not understand," she said.

"I have not the honour," he repeated. "I do not know you."

The girl was leaning with her back against the desk in a somewhat mannish attitude. He stood between them. It will always remain Life's chief comic success: the man between two women. The situation has amused the world for so many years. Yet, somehow, he contrived to maintain a certain dignity.

"Maybe," he continued, "you are confounding me with a Dick Danvers who lived in New York up to a few months ago. I knew him well—a worthless scamp you had done better never to have met."

"You bear a wonderful resemblance to him," laughed the woman.

"The poor fool is dead," he answered. "And he left for you, my dear lady, this dying message: that, from the bottom of his soul, he was sorry for the wrong he had done you. He asked you to forgive him—and forget him."

"The year appears to be opening unfortunately for me," said the woman. "First my lover, then my husband."

He had nerved himself to fight the living—this was a blow from the dead. The man had been his friend.

"Dead?"

"He was killed, it appears, in that last expedition in July," answered the woman. "I received the news from the Foreign Office only a fortnight ago."

An ugly look came into his eyes—the look of a cornered creature fighting for its life. "Why have you followed me here? Why do I find you here alone with her? What have you told her?"

The woman shrugged her shoulders. "Only the truth."

"All the truth?" he demanded—"all? Ah! be just. Tell her it was not all my fault. Tell her all the truth."

"What would you have me tell her? That I played Potiphar's wife to your Joseph?"

"Ah, no! The truth—only the truth. That you and I were a pair of idle fools with the devil dancing round us. That we played a fool's game, and that it is over."

"Is it over? Dick, is it over?" She flung her arms towards him; but he threw her from him almost brutally. "The man is dead, I tell you. His folly and his sin lie dead with him. I have nothing to do with you, nor you with me."

"Dick!" she whispered. "Dick, cannot you understand? I must speak with you alone."

But they did not understand, neither the man nor the child.

"Dick, are you really dead?" she cried. "Have you no pity for me? Do you think that I have followed you here to grovel at your feet for a mere whim? Am I acting like a woman sane and sound? Don't you see that I am mad? Must I tell you before her? Dick——" She staggered towards him, and the fine cloak slipped from her shoulders; and then it was that Tommy changed from a child into a woman, and raised the other woman from the ground

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with crooning words of encouragement such as mothers use, and led her to the inner room. "Do not go," she said, turning to Dick; "I shall be back in a few minutes."

He crossed to one of the windows against which beat the City's roar, and it seemed to him as the throb of passing footsteps beating down through the darkness to where he lay in his grave.

She re-entered, closing the door softly behind her. "It is true?" she asked.

"It can be. I had not thought of it."

They spoke in low, matter-of-fact tones, as people do who have grown weary of their own emotions.

"When did he go away—her husband?"

"About—it is February now, is it not? About eighteen months ago."

"And died. Rather conveniently, poor fellow."

"I do not know," he answered listlessly. "I do not intend to marry her."

"You would leave her alone?"

"It is not as if she were a poor woman. You can do anything with money."

"It will not mend reputation. Her position in society is everything to that class of woman."

"My marrying her now," he pointed out, "would not save her."

"Practically speaking, it would," the girl pleaded. "The world does not go out of its way to find out things it does not want to know. Marry her as quietly as possible and travel for a year or two."

"Why should I? Ah! it is easy enough to call a man a coward for defending himself against a woman. What is he to do when he is fighting for his life?"

"There is the child to be considered," she urged—"your child. You see, dear, we all do wrong sometimes. We must not let others suffer for our fault more—more than we can help."

He turned to her for the first time. "And you?"

"I? Oh, I shall cry for a little while, but later on I shall laugh as often. Life is not all love. I have my work."

"'Dick, cannot you understand?'"

He knew her well by this time. And also it came to him that it would be a finer thing to be worthy of her than even to possess her.

So he did her bidding and went out with the other woman. Tommy was glad it was press-night. She would not be able to think for hours to come, and then, perhaps, she would be feeling too tired. Work can be very kind.

Were this an artistic story, here, of course, one would write "Finis." But in the workaday world one never knows the ending till it comes. Had it been otherwise, I doubt I could have found courage to tell you this story of Tommy. It is not all true—at least, I do not suppose so. One drifts unconsciously a little way into dreamland when one sits oneself down to recall the happenings of long ago; while Fancy, with a sly wink, whispers ever and again to Memory: "Let me tell this incident—picture that scene: I can make it so much more interesting than you would." But Tommy—how can I put it without saying too much? There is someone I think of when I speak of her. To remember only her dear wounds, and not the healing of them, would have been a task too painful. I love to dwell on their next meeting. Flipp, passing him on the steps, did not know him, the tall, sunburnt gentleman with the sweet, grave-faced little girl.

"Seen that face somewhere before," mused Flipp, as at the corner of Bedford Street he climbed into a hansom, "seen it somewhere on a thinner man."

For Dick Danvers, that he did not recognise Flipp, there was more excuse. A very old young man had Flipp become at thirty. Flipp no longer enjoyed popular journalism. He produced it.

The gold-bound doorkeeper feared the mighty Clodd would be unable to see so insignificant an atom as an unappointed stranger, but would let the card of Mr. Richard Danvers plead for itself. To the gold-bound keeper's surprise came down the message that Mr. Danvers was to be at once shown up.

"I thought, somehow, you would come to me first," said the portly Clodd, advancing with outstretched hand. "And this is——?"

"My little girl, Honor. We have been travelling for the last few months."

Clodd took the grave, small face between his big, rough hands: "Yes. She is like you. But looks as if she were going to have more sense. Forgive me, my dear," laughed Clodd; "I knew your father when he was younger."

They lit their cigars and talked.

"Well, not exactly dead; we amalgamated it," winked Clodd in answer to Danver's inquiry. "It was just a trifle *too* high-class. Besides, the old gentleman was not getting younger. It hurt him a little at first. But then came Tommy's great success, and that has reconciled him to all things. Do they know you are in England?"

"No," explained Danvers; "we arrived only last night."

Clodd called directions down the speaking-tube.

"You will find hardly any change in her. One still has to keep one's eye upon her chin. She has not even lost her old habit of taking stock of people. You remember." Clodd laughed.

They talked a little longer, till there came a whistle, and Clodd put his ear to the tube.

"I have to see her on business," said Clodd, rising; "you may as well come with me. They are still in the old place, Gough Square."

Tommy was out, but Peter was expecting her every minute.

Peter did not know Dick, but would not admit it. Forgetfulness was a sign of age, and Peter still felt young.

"I know your face quite well," said Peter; "can't put a name to it, that's all."

Clodd whispered it to him, together with information, bringing history up to date. And then light fell upon the old lined face. He came towards Dick, meaning to take him by both hands, but, perhaps because he had become somewhat feeble, he seemed glad when the younger man put his arms around him and held him for a moment. It was un-English, and both of them felt a little ashamed of themselves afterwards.

"What we want," said Clodd, addressing Peter, "we three—you and I and Miss Danvers—is tea and cakes, with cream in them; and I know a shop where they sell them. We will call back for your father in half an hour," Clodd explained to Miss Danvers; "he has to talk over a matter of business with Miss Hope."

"I know," answered the grave-faced little person. She drew Dick's face down to hers and kissed it. And then the three went out together, leaving Dick standing by the window.

"Couldn't we hide somewhere till she comes?" suggested Miss Danvers. "I want to see her."

So they waited in the open doorway of a near printing-house till Tommy drove up. Both Peter and Clodd watched the child's face with some anxiety. She nodded gravely to herself three times, then slipped her hand into Peter's.

Tommy opened the door with her latch-key and passed in.

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SOME GREAT BIG MEN.

DESCRIBED AND PICTURED BY
HARRY FURNISS.

IT is more difficult to select a great number of great big men, from the annals of the world, than of great little men. The familiar saying, that valuable goods are done up in small parcels, would seem to be true of the mental qualities that make for greatness. But so, in a measure, is the repartee: "So are poisons," if we take poison to mean the sting of a bitter tongue. For, within living memory, some of the giants in literature, politics, and other walks of life that lead to greatness, have been endowed with the most caustic speech.

Our greatest, and most deliberate, satirist, Thackeray, like the most bitter of modern European politicians, Bismarck, was a big man; while, in thinking of home politics, a comparison is at once suggested, between the giant Daniel O'Connell and that facetious and pleasant small man Tim Healy.

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

Let me first take Daniel O'Connell. I have in my studio a marvellous group of small, wax figures, modelled by a celebrated Irish artist of the time of O'Connell, representing the great liberator, as he was called, surrounded by his poor, deluded followers. This I treasure as a work of curious art, and not at all out of admiration for O'Connell or his views. For on the bookshelf close to it, I find, in the pages of Froude, the following caustic and, to my mind, true summing up of this great big man—

MARK LEMON.

"The Catholic Church," writes Mr. Froude, "owed much to O'Connell: the people less than nothing. No practical good thing, not even the smallest, ever came to the Irish peasant from this glorious liberator. Emancipation and agitation might make the fortunes of patriotic orators, and make the Castle tremble before the Catholic archbishops; but they drained no bogs, filled no hungry stomachs, nor patched the rags in which the squalid millions were shivering; and still as the potato multiplied, the people multiplied, and beggary multiplied along with them. O'Connell cared no more for the poor than the harshest of Protestant absentees. The more millions he could claim as being behind him, the mightier he seemed. His own estates at Derrynane and Cahirciveen

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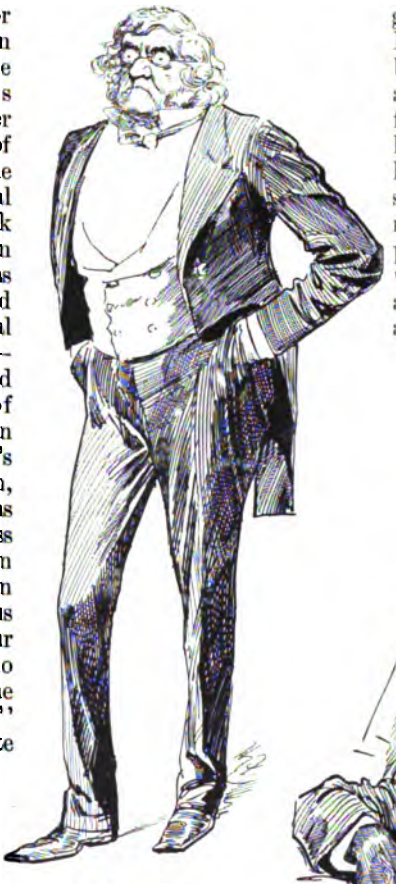
were as naked, as neglected, as subdivided, as littered with ragged crowds depending on a single root for their subsistence as any other in the country to which he belonged."

But perhaps O'Connell would have cared less for Froude's opinion of him than he did for the attacks made on this great Catholic, week after week, in the pages of *Punch*, when under the editorship of the genial man of the world, Mark Lemon. Mark Lemon was himself nearly as large as O'Connell, and like the retired Radical—if not Republican—publican, O'Connell had also a keen sense of humour. Well known is the story of O'Connell's duel with a little man, who, when a remark was made on the unfairness of his fighting a man so much smaller than himself, said: "Let us draw a circle on your chest, and agree that no shot that hits outside the circle shall count." O'Connell used to relate this story with gusto, although it told against himself.



THACKERAY.

Mark Lemon was the man who made *Punch*. He was born to be its editor. Originally he kept the tavern at the corner of Wych Street, known as "The Shakespeare's Head," so that "the bowl of punch, with a little lemon in it," was naturally spirited when under his guidance. According to Mr. Spielmann's "History of *Punch*," it was when a tavern-keeper that Mark Lemon married, and he borrowed £5 in order to be able to do so. Immediately afterwards he sold a five-act comedy to Charles Matthews for £100—a big price in those days, but one that would hardly satisfy a modern playwright for royalties on but a few nights.

Opinions differ as to Mark Lemon's qualities both as a man and as an editor. He was thirty-four years of age when he became editor of *Punch*, with the munificent salary of thirty shillings a week. According to Spielmann, one eminent journalist—more eminent than Mark Lemon himself—writes him down a melancholy sycophant; and a distinguished *Punch* artist who worked with him for years could find "nothing good about Mark but his laugh." Dickens, on the other hand, believed in him as a most affectionate and true-hearted fellow. All one can say, who had not the pleasure of knowing him, is that his portrait would seem to suggest that the judgment of Charles Dickens was probably correct. Mark Lemon was an actor as well as an editor and a dramatist; for he appeared as *Falstaff*, and probably the joke has already been made that Uncle Mark, as he was called, made his mark in more spheres than one.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

Thackeray, undoubtedly a great man in figure, as well as a great author, was a small

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man in some respects. He was a small man in his jealousy of the little, five-foot-one-inch Douglas Jerrold; small in his jealousy of Charles Dickens. Yet, even from this point of view, he was small and great by turns. He was, for instance, magnanimous in his hatred of any injustice. When Doyle left *Punch*, on account of its attacks upon the Pope, he loyally defended Doyle's secession. It was at this time that the remark was made: "Thackeray is turning Roman," whereupon Jerrold made reply: "He'd best begin with his nose." He finally resigned his appointment on *Punch* because he could not tolerate the continual abuse of Prince Albert, and the ghastly cartoon, by Leech, showing the Emperor of the French as a beggar on horseback, with a sword reeking with blood.

In size, at least, we have Thackeray's prototype, in the French author, Alexandre Dumas, unlike him, perhaps, in every other way.

This great author—great by reason of his prolific output, even if he had possessed no other title to the epithet—was one of the most extraordinary men who ever held a pen. He lived the life of a prince, in a house built like a palace. Engaging a score or more of assistants, he turned out his novels as a manufacturer would turn out machine-made goods. He made several fortunes and spent them; and towards the end he actually became an advertisement for a tradesman, sitting in a shop window, to attract a crowd. Perhaps even his own son came to look upon him as a show, for there are many anecdotes told of him that would seem to point in this direction.

M. Dumas, the son, was one day exhibiting

DR. W. G. GRACE.

a few of his father's manuscripts, to satisfy the curiosity of some visitors, when someone ventured to remark that they were but imperfectly punctuated. "Oh, sir," says the young cicerone, "were my father to punctuate all he writes, he would, in the course of his life, have been minus ten volumes." One of the elder Dumas' best witticisms is well remembered: "Here," said he, "is a paper worth ten sous," showing him one of those stamped papers used for endorsing bills. "I

THE TICHBORNE CLAIMANT.

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THE LATE LORD SALISBURY.

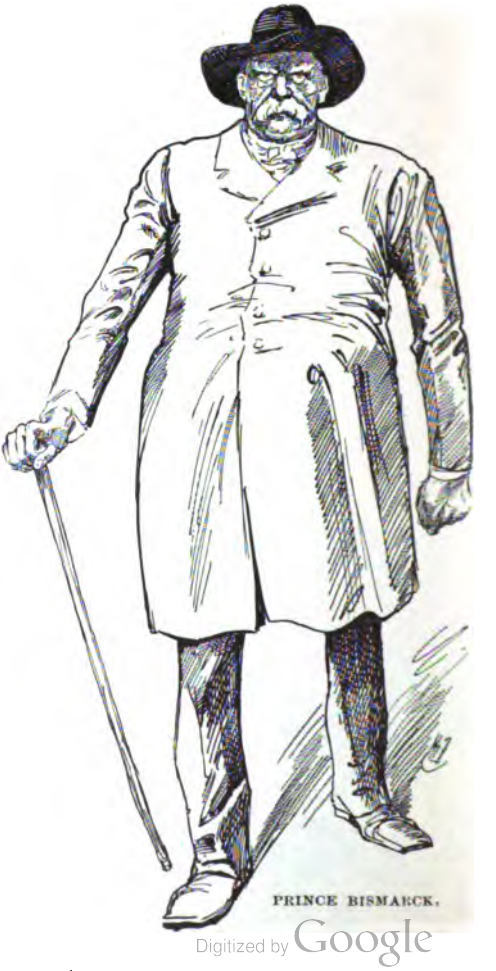
can, in a few seconds, reduce its value to nothing." So saying, and to justify his assertion, he put his signature at the bottom.

Mr. Francis Gribble describes the elder Dumas as the idol of Parisian society, earning vast sums of money and spending lavishly in luxury and in riotous living. "He was sometimes a dandy and sometimes an unkempt Bohemiam, but always non-moral and always a megalomaniac." De Villemessant says: "He chose the party he would go to as he would choose his theatre or his newspaper; and when it was whispered in Paris: 'Dumas is going to such and such a house this evening,' there was always a throng at the door like the crowd at the entrance of a play-house." Dumas' *château* at Saint Germain is thus described: "Gothic pavilions, turrets, minarets, an artificial lake, with an island and a cascade; a picture-gallery, a studio, an aviary, a monkey-house, a stable, a bijou theatre, a kiosk with a blue ceiling studded with stars." Behind all the splendour and squalor was the manufacturer of romances, pouring out impossible quantities of books. In one year he signed sixty volumes. Mr. Gribble compares Dumas to the "fiction editor" of the halfpenny Press. He made suggestions as to the designs of novels, and rewrote his secretary's drafts with volcanic energy and genius. In this connection the following story is worth telling—

One morning the younger Dumas called on his father, who asked him: "Have you seen my new novel?" To which the son replied: "No, my father—have *you*?"

The mention of a really great man who became a public show reminds me of that curious mass of humanity in whom acuteness and cunning take the place of talent and education.

The Tichborne Claimant was, perhaps, one of the most extraordinary men belonging to this category to be found in the annals of our time. He certainly deserves to be placed in the gallery of big men, for the part he played was as big as his body. To have hoodwinked men of education, women of society, masses of the general public, as he did, was certainly an extraordinary feat.



PRINCE BISMARCK.

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During his famous, or infamous, trials, he exhibited himself, in a City hotel coffee-room, to a crowd of supporters and admirers, who came to gaze upon his curious upturned thumbs and the other marks which the ex-butcher depended upon to prove himself Sir Roger Tichborne, while he was only Arthur Orton.

It is a relief to pass from this impostor to a genuine, big, healthy Englishman, Dr. W. G. Grace, the greatest representative player of our national game too well known to the public to need more than this mention and his portrait.

There is one advantage that big men certainly possess — they can be seen.

PAUL KRUGER.

Some years ago one of the best-known figures in London was the massive form of Colonel Fred Burnaby. He was one of those characteristic Englishmen whom, in our day, their countrymen delight to honour. But Fred Burnaby was a man of muscle and of daring, rather than of mind — a reckless, happy-go-lucky, thorough good fellow. His death was characteristic of the man. A volunteer, he rushed out recklessly to meet the enemy and was killed.

A big man, of quite a different type, was John Wilson — "Christopher North," the author. He was one of the few men of literary eminence also noted for exceptional height of stature and handsome appearance. When he and his beautiful bride entered the ballroom at a county ball, all eyes were turned to them in admiration, their physical attractions alone making them remarkable, even to those who knew nothing of Christopher North's work, and cared less. John Wilson was a famous pedestrian, and although his work is full of appreciation of the delicate and tender beauties of Nature, he could, on occasion, use his fists in the "noble" art of self-defence. A story is told of him that one evening, after being present at a dinner-party in London, he was set upon by two robust thieves who thought the gentleman in evening dress would be an easy prey. But they reckoned without their host, and were soon bowled over by the pugilistically accomplished poet, who was so little disconcerted by the encounter that he straightway set off, the same night, to walk to Oxford.

LI HUNG CHANG.

John Wilson was, perhaps, the last man one would have expected to find occupying the chair of metaphysics at an important Scottish University; but he did so, and that with remarkable success. Suddenly robbed of a large fortune and left almost penniless, John Wilson was offered the post of Professor of Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, and, although he knew comparatively little of the subject, accepted the appointment, and

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worked, night and day, for six months to fit himself for his new duties. At his first lecture the students came prepared to hoot him down, for the appointment was far from being a popular one; but Christopher North won them over, almost at once, by his remarkable presence and address and by the charm of his exposition.

In politics, besides O'Connell, there have been very many representatives of bulk; but hardly any of these big men have been of the mental calibre to raise them to the category of really great men to which the Marquess of Salisbury belongs. If bigness referred only to height, and not to breadth as well, the names of many great men in all spheres of activity might be included in the list of big men.

To jump to the Celestial Empire, whatever one may think of Li Hung Chang's method of acquiring wealth, there is evidence enough of his greatness in many respects. At the age of eighty, Li stood six feet in his shoes; and he was decidedly the greatest statesman in Asia, while there are not so many in Europe who could match him, especially in the department of diplomacy, a department in which strict adherence to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, is hardly an essential. To be too near the head of the State, in China, often means to be near losing one's own; and Li Hung Chang has often been in danger of decapitation; but he has known how to keep his head in the moment of danger, and where he could not decently ensure his safety by absence of body, has done so by the exercise of presence of mind. On one occasion, for instance, when he was sent for, for the purpose of execution, he obeyed the summons, indeed, but he came with an army of 10,000 men, which so upset the calculations of his would-be destroyers that they presented him with his Yellow Jacket instead.

A man quite as mysterious and as interesting, and at one time as influential, as the big Chinaman, but his very antithesis in the matter of culture, is the great big Dutchman who gave us so much trouble in South Africa—ex-President Kruger, whose portrait I include in this article.

COLONEL BURNABY.

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A WHEAT HOSPITAL.

By FREDERICK A. A. TALBOT.

THE WHEAT HOSPITAL ON LAKE SUPERIOR.

IT will probably come as a shock to the average Englishman, who depends to a great extent upon the wheat supplies of Canada and the United States for his subsistence, to learn that the corn from which his bread is made is subject to various maladies, and that before it is converted into flour it has to pass through the doctor's hands to be purified. Yet such is the case, and the treatment of diseased and dirty wheat, prior to its transportation to the European or American markets, constitutes an important operation.

The building in which the wheat is doctored is situated at Port Arthur, at the north-western extremity of Lake Superior. Externally the erection resembles the huge towering grain-elevators indigenous to the districts where the cultivation of corn constitutes the staple industry. It is built in the lake itself upon piling and strong cribwork, so that the various corn vessels can approach right alongside to discharge their consignments of wheat to be cured, or to receive shipments of treated wheat for conveyance to the various markets of the world. During the course of the year no less than 2,000,000 bushels of wheat pass through this hospital, so that a comprehensive idea of its utility may be gathered.

A CAR OF WHEAT TO BE CURED.

The establishment of this unique institution has proved a great boon to the farmers of Manitoba and the North-West Territories generally. Hitherto the farmers have often incurred heavy and ruinous losses through the wheat being afflicted with some peculiar malady which rendered it unfit for human consumption. One of the most prevalent complaints is a fungoid growth, commonly known as "smut," which attacks certain kernels of the wheat, changing the gluten and starch into a black dust.

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When the grain is threshed, this black dust adheres to the good kernels of the wheat and greatly depreciates its value. It is estimated that the farmers suffer a loss of £3,600,000 per annum from this cause.

The farmer is also very liable to sustain serious loss by wet weather at the time of harvesting. The loss from this cause is

CONVEYOR FOR CARRYING CORN FROM VESSELS AND TRAINS TO THE HOSPITAL.

heavier in a new country where there are no barns, and where in many cases the grain remains in the stack until it is threshed. It was principally for the purpose of minimising any losses from this cause that the Wheat Hospital was founded. Prior to the establishment of this institution this "dropsical" wheat was either destroyed or utilised for feeding cattle.

The hospital is situated 450 miles distant from the prairie grain section of Manitoba, and the corn is conveyed hither in railway-cars. The wheat upon its arrival

WHEAT UNDERGOING PROCESS OF CLEANING.

at the hospital is first inspected by a Dominion Government Grain Inspector, and that which is absolutely incurable is removed. There is one disease which even the researches of horticultural science have not yet overcome. This is the most virulent type of smut, commonly known as the "stinking smut" or "bunt." In this instance the whole kernel is affected, all the nutritive portions of it having been consumed, leaving but a thin shell or husk. When this is broken, myriads of spores are disseminated with a pungent odour, and any flour with which they might

WEIGHING-MACHINES WHERE THE CORN IS WEIGHED BEFORE AND AFTER TREATMENT.

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THE "WET WHEAT" IN DRYING-MACHINE.

come into contact is absolutely ruined. The wheat after it has passed the rigid Government examination is divided into three grades, according to the amount of smut adhering to the grain. The cleanest simply undergoes a violent scouring and brushing process, by which it is rendered perfectly clean, but the dirtiest variety is thoroughly washed and subsequently dried and cleaned, after which ablutions it is impossible to distinguish it from the best wheat ever grown.

The grain is conveyed to the various rooms by means of an elevator consisting of steel buckets attached to an endless belt stretching from the bottom to the top of the building. It is carefully weighed before it is submitted to the cleaning processes. The wheat which is thickly covered with dirt, but which is perfectly sound in kernel, is thrown into the scouring-machines, where it is submitted to vigorous brushing, tossing, and burnishing between pieces of metal revolving with tremendous rapidity. Upon their exodus from this machine the cereal is as bright and clean as if it had never been contaminated.

The wheat which is affected with what one might term "dropsy"—that is to say, it was soaked by the rain during harvesting—is divided into three classes as follows: "tough" wheat, containing an excess of four-and-a-half per cent. of moisture and dirt; "damp" wheat, containing an excess of seven-and-a-half per cent. of moisture; and "wet" wheat, which contains from eleven to fifteen per cent. of moisture and dirt above the normal amount.

This wheat is conveyed to the washing

MACHINE IN WHICH "WET WHEAT" IS DRIED.

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and drying plant by means of the elevator in the usual manner, and discharged through capacious spouts into the large bins over the drying-plant. Each drier contains about 400 bushels of wheat, and the aggregate capacity of the drying-plant, which is very elaborate, is 6,500 bushels per hour. The drying-bin consists of a number of screens clothed on each side with wire cloth. The grain is placed between these sheets. A small space is left between each screen through which the hot air for drying the grain is circulated. Two rows of these screens stand side by side, separated in the centre by about two feet space, and the heat is forced into this interval, and can only escape through side openings, after it has passed through the wheat. The time occupied in the drying operation varies from one to three hours, according to the amount of moisture contained in the grain. The air is heated by being drawn through steam-heated coils, and circulated through the grain by means of a rapidly revolving fan, the hot air after its passage through the machine, together with the moisture with which it has become impregnated, being discharged into the outside atmosphere.

When the wheat has been thoroughly dried by the circulation of the hot air, the latter is substituted by currents of cold air to cool the grain. When this has been satisfactorily accomplished, slides at the lower part of the bins are withdrawn, and the cured wheat falls out into another conveyor, which carries it to the top of the building once more, where it is re-weighed and the amount of loss and waste in drying ascertained. On the average the loss of weight is such that the grain weighs three to four pounds per measured bushel less than when received. Weighing

HOSPITAL ATTENDANT WITH SPECIAL MASK TO PROTECT HIS LUNGS FROM INJURY.

completed, it is passed through the final cleaning-machine and is then ready for shipment.

As might be naturally supposed, the vigorous brushing, cleaning, and scouring to which the wheat is submitted causes the circulation of a vast quantity of dust throughout the building. To prevent the *employés* suffering injury to their lungs from this dust, they are compelled to wear special face-masks. These are made of hard white rubber, provided with small orifices in the sides into which are pressed small pieces of sponge. The mask completely fits over the mouth and nostrils, and is maintained in position by a strap passing over the ears and round the head. As the workmen inhale the air, the passage of the dust is arrested by the small piece of sponge.

MACHINE FOR SCOURING "DIRTY" WHEAT.

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They also don a pair of cumbersome goggles completely covering their eyes, so that their vision may not be impaired or any irritation generated. The workmen when equipped in this manner present a very bizarre appearance, as may be gathered from our illustration of an attendant equipped with this apparatus.

At some portions of the operation the wheat has to fall a long distance, or is violently thrown against the sides of the covering frames. The constant friction this operation causes is so great that the wheat

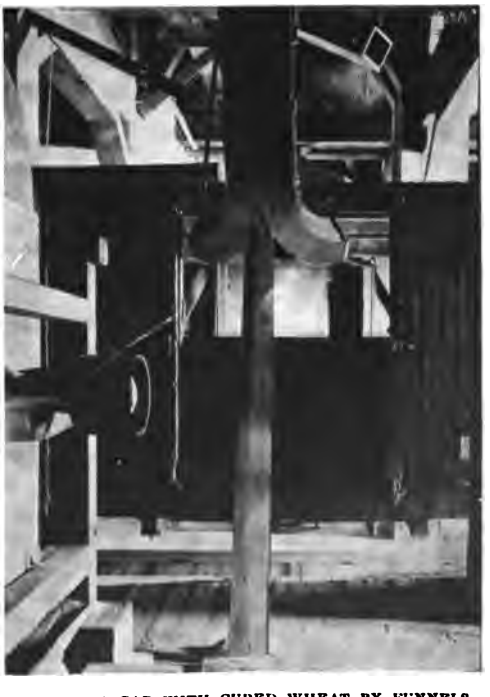
COILS OF HOT AIR AND FAN FOR FORCING HOT AIR THROUGH THE "WET WHEAT" TO DRY IT.

will completely wear out a pine plank two-and-a-half inches in thickness in a very few months. The patterns designed by the wheat in this manner upon the plank are often very curious.

The corn is delivered direct to the vessels lying alongside, or to the freight-cars standing within the building, by means of a long funnel extending into the hold of the ship or the interior of the railway-car. The grain pours through this pipe until the car or vessel has received its complement. By means of this funnel the loading operation is accomplished within a very short space of time.

INGENIOUS MACHINE FOR SEPARATING THE WHEAT FROM THE OATS.

The working of this hospital has proved of inestimable assistance, value, and protection to the farmers of Manitoba and the North-West Territories. Hitherto vast consignments of wheat which were considered useless and were destroyed are converted into a marketable article. In the past, grain was sometimes received by the railway companies in such a condition that it was



LOADING A CAR WITH CURED WHEAT BY FUNNELS.

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either impossible to warehouse it or it was not really worth transportation. Now, however, the farmer suffers no loss, since the cost of doctoring the wheat is amply repaid by the enhanced price he receives for his goods through their being in better and cleaner condition.

Wheat often arrives at the hospital mixed with oats, and it necessarily has to be separated. The fulfilment of this task by manual labour would be both expensive and tedious, and a special machine has therefore been constructed for the purpose, which is infallible in its action. Although wheat is the principal cereal treated in the establishment, it is equally available for other kinds of grain, such as oats and barley.

The elevator is conducted upon open lines—that is to say, the owner of grain, whether he be a farmer or a dealer, can ship his produce to this building to be treated. The charges for each particular operation are the same to everyone, without preference, and the capacity of the elevator for drying and cleaning is constantly being augmented to cope with the exigencies of the increasing demand. The drying capacity is from 20,000 to 30,000 bushels per twenty-four hours, with an additional cleaning capacity of from 10,000 to 40,000 bushels for the same period, according to the condition in which the wheat is received and the amount of operations to which it has to be subjected in order to clean it.

Grain treated at this hospital has proved to be equal in every respect to the best grades of wheat that have not been damaged by rain or dampness. In fact, it may be considered superior, since it may be stored away and kept for an indefinite period without any danger of deterioration. There is now wheat in store that was cleaned and dried over two years ago, and is in every way as fine as when it was first harvested. Certainly the grain improves by its short sojourn within the hospital. It is thoroughly cleaned, its nutritive properties are preserved, all dangerous or injurious substances are removed, so that when it is milled the flour is of the purest quality.

HOW A VESSEL IS LOADED WITH CURED WHEAT.
Observe the pipe leading to the hold of vessel through which the corn travels.

In conclusion, I must acknowledge the courtesy of Messrs. G. King and Company, the proprietors of the Wheat Hospital, for the loan of the photographs and the assistance they rendered in the compilation of this article.

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NOCTURNE AT THE MAJESTIC

By Arnold Bennett

Author of "The Grand Babylon Hotel" and "Anna of the Five Towns."

IN the daily strenuous life of a great hotel, there are periods during which its bewildering activities slacken and the vast organism seems to be under the influence of an opiate. Such a period recurs after dinner, when the guests are preoccupied by the mysterious processes of digestion in the drawing-rooms or smoking-rooms, or in the stalls of a theatre. On the evening of this nocturne, the well-known circular entrance-hall of the Majestic, with its tesselated pavement, its malachite pillars, its Persian rugs, its lounges, and its renowned stuffed bears at the foot of the grand stairway, was for the moment deserted, save by the head hall-porter and the head night-porter, and the girl in the bureau. It was a quarter to nine, and the head hall-porter was abdicating his pagoda to the head night-porter and telling him the necessary secrets of the day. These two lords, before whom the motley panorama of human existence was continually being enrolled, held a portentous confabulation night and morning. They had no illusions; they knew life. Shakespeare himself might have listened to them with advantage.

The girl in the bureau, like a beautiful and languishing animal in its cage, leaned against her window and looked between two pillars at the magnificent lords. She was too far off to catch their talk; and, indeed, she watched them absently, in a reverie induced by the sweet melancholy of the summer twilight, by the torpidity of the hour, and by the prospect of the next day, which was her day off. The liveried functionaries ignored her, probably scorned her as a mere pretty little morsel. Nevertheless, she was the centre of energy, not they. If money were payable, she was the person to receive it; if a customer wanted a room, she would choose it; and the lords had to call her "Miss." The immense and splendid hotel pulsed round this simple heart hidden under a white blouse. Especially in summer, her presence and the presence of her companions in the bureau (but to-night she was alone) ministered to the satisfaction of male guests, whose cruel but profoundly human instincts found pleasure in the fact that no matter when they came in from their wanderings, the pretty captives were always there in the bureau, smiling welcome, puzzling stupid little brains and puckering pale brows over enormous ledgers, twittering borrowed facetiousness from rosy mouths, and smoothing out seductive toilettes with long, thin hands that were made for ring and bracelet and rudder-lines, and not a bit for the pen and the ruler. The pretty little thing despised of the functionaries corresponded almost exactly in appearance to the typical bureau girl. She was moderately tall; she had a good, slim figure, all pleasant curves, flaxen hair and plenty of it, and a dainty, rather expressionless face; the ears

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and mouth were very small, the eyes large and blue, the nose so-so, the cheeks and forehead of an equal ivory pallor, the chin trifling, with a crease under the lower lip and a rich convexity springing out from below the crease. The extremities of the full lips were nearly always drawn up in a smile, mechanical, but infallibly attractive. The hair was of an orthodox frizziness. You would have said she was a nice, kind, good-natured girl, flirtatious but correct, well adapted to adorn a dog-cart on Sundays.

This was Nina, foolish Nina, aged twenty-one. In her reverie, the entire Hôtel Majestic weighed on her; she had a more than adequate sense of her own solitary importance in the bureau; and stirring obscurely beneath that consciousness were the deep, ineradicable longings of a poor pretty girl for heaps of money, endless luxury of finery and chocolates, and sentimental silken dalliance.

Suddenly a stranger entered the hall. His advent seemed to wake the place out of the trance into which it had fallen. The nocturne had begun. Nina straightened herself and intensified her eternal smile. The two porters became military and smiled with a special and peculiar urbanity; several lesser but still lordly functionaries appeared among the pillars; a page-boy emerged by magic from the region of the chimney-piece, like Mephistopheles in Faust's study; and some guests of both sexes strolled chattering across the tesselated pavement, as they passed from one wing of the hotel to the other.

"How do, Tom?" said the stranger, grasping the hand of the head hall-porter and nodding to the head night-porter. His voice showed that he was an American, and his demeanour that he was one of those experienced, wealthy, and kindly travellers who know the Christian names of all the hall-porters in the world and have the trick of securing their intimacy and fealty. He wore a blue suit and a light grey wideawake, and his fine moustache was grizzled. In his left hand he carried a brown bag.

"Nicely, thank you, sir," Tom replied. "How are you, sir?"

"Oh! about six and six."

Whereupon both porters laughed heartily.

Tom escorted him to the bureau and tried to relieve him of his bag; inferior lords escorted Tom.

"I guess I'll keep the grip," said the stranger. "Mr. Pank will be around with some more baggage pretty soon. We've expressed the rest on to the steamer. Well, my dear," he went on, turning to Nina, "you're a fresh face here." He looked her steadily in the eyes.

"Yes, I am," she said, conquered instantly. Radiant and triumphant, the man brought good-humour into every face, like some wonderful combination of the sun and the sea-breeze.

"Give me two bedrooms and a parlour, please," he commanded.

"First floor?" asked Nina prettily.

"First floor! Well, I should say! *And* on the Strand, my dear."

She bent over her ledgers, blushing.

"Send someone to the 'phone, Tom, and let 'em put me on to the Regency, will you?" said the stranger.

"Yes, sir. Samuels, go and ring up the Regency Theatre—quick!"

Swift departure of a lord.

"And ask Alphonse to come up to my bedroom in ten minutes from now," the stranger proceeded to Tom. "I shall want a dandy supper for fourteen at a quarter after eleven."

"Yes, sir. No dinner, sir?"

"No. We dined on the Pullman. Well, my dear? Figured it out yet?"

"Numbers 102, 120, and 107," said Nina.

"Keys, 102, 120, and 107," said Tom.

Swift departure of another lord to the pagoda.

"How much?" demanded the stranger.

"The bedrooms are twenty-five shillings, and the sitting-room two guineas."

"I guess Mr. Pank won't mind that. Hallo, Pank, you're here! I'm through. Your number's 102 or 120, which you fancy. Just going to the 'phone a minute, and then I'll join you upstairs."

Mr. Pank was a younger man, possessing a thin, astute, intellectual face. He walked into the hall with noticeable deliberation. His travelling costume was faultless, but from beneath his straw hat his black hair sprouted in a somewhat peculiar fashion over his broad forehead. He smiled lazily and shrewdly, and without a word disappeared into a lift. Two large portmanteaus accompanied him.

Presently the elder stranger could be heard battling with the obstinate idiosyncrasies of a London telephone.

"You haven't registered," Nina called to him in her tremulous, delicate, captivating voice, as he came out of the telephone-box.

He advanced to sign and, taking a pen

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and leaning on the front of the bureau, wrote in the visitors' book in a careful, legible hand: "Lionel Belmont, New York." Having thus written, and still resting on the right elbow,

Nina laughed timidly as she pushed his room-ticket across the page of the big book. She thought that Mr. Lionel Belmont was perfectly delightful.

"'I guess I'll want six-and-a-half hansoms, boy!'"

he raised his right hand a little and waved the pen like a delicious menace at Nina.

"Mr. Pank hasn't registered, either," he said slowly, with a charming affectation of solemnity, as though accusing Mr. Pank of some appalling crime.

"No, he hasn't," she said, trying also to be arch; "but he must."

At that moment she happened to glance at the right hand of Mr. Belmont; in the brilliance of the electric light she could see the fair skin of the wrist and forearm within

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the whiteness of his shirt-sleeve. She stared at what she saw, every muscle tense.

"I guess you can round up Mr. Pank yourself, my dear, later on," said Lionel Belmont, and turned quickly away.

He did not notice that her large eyes had grown larger and her pale face paler. In another moment the hall was deserted again. Mr. Belmont had ascended in the lift, Tom had gone to his rest, and the head night-porter was concealed in the pagoda. Nina sank down limply on her stool, her nostrils twitching; she feared she was about to faint, but this final calamity did not occur. She had nevertheless experienced the greatest shock of her brief life, and the way of it was thus.

II.

NINA MALPAS was born amid the embers of one of those fiery conjugal dramas which occur with romantic frequency in the provincial towns of the northern Midlands, where industrial conditions are such as to foster an independent spirit among women of the lower class generally, and where by long tradition "character" is allowed to exploit itself more freely than in the southern parts of our island. Lemuel Malpas was a dashing young commercial traveller, with what is known as "an agreeable address" in Bursley, one of the Five Towns, Staffordshire. On the strength of his dash he wooed and married the daughter of a hotel-keeper in the neighbouring town of Hanbridge. Six months after the wedding—in other words, at the most dangerous period of the connubial career—Mrs. Malpas's father died, and Mrs. Malpas became the absolute mistress of eight thousand pounds. Lemuel* had carefully foreseen this windfall, and wished to use the money in enterprises of the earthenware trade. Mrs. Malpas, pretty and vivacious, with a self-conceit hardened by the adulation of saloon-bars, very decidedly thought otherwise. Her motto was: "What's yours is mine, but what's mine's my own." The difference was accentuated. Long mutual resistances were followed by reconciliations which grew more and more transitory, and at length both recognised that the union, not founded on genuine affection, had been a mistake. "Keep your dirty brass!" Lemuel exclaimed one morning, and he went off on a journey and forgot to come back. A curious letter, dated from Liverpool, wished his wife happiness and informed her that since she was well provided for, he had no scruples about leaving her. Mrs. Malpas was startled at first, but she soon perceived that what Lemuel had done was exactly what the brilliant and enterprising Lemuel might have been expected to do. She jerked up her doll's head and ejaculated: "So much the better!" A few weeks later she sold the furniture and took rooms in Scarborough, where, amid pleasurable surroundings, she determined to lead the joyous life of a grass widow, free of all cares. Then, to her astonishment and disgust, Nina was born. She had not bargained for Nina. She found herself in the tiresome position of a mother whose explanations of her child lack plausibility. One lodging-house keeper to whom she had hazarded the statement that Lemuel was in Australia, saucily replied: "I thought maybe it was the North Pole he was gone to." This decided Mrs. Malpas. She returned suddenly to the Five Towns, where at least her reputation was secure. Only a week previously, Lemuel had learnt indirectly that she had left their native district; he determined thenceforward to forget her completely. Mrs. Malpas's prettiness was of the fleeting sort; after Nina's birth she began to get stout and coarse, and the nostalgia of the saloon-bar, the coffee-room, and the sanded portico overtook her. The "Tiger" at Bursley was for sale—a respectable commercial hotel, the best in the town. She purchased it, wines, omnibus-connection, and all, and developed into the typical landlady in black silk and gold rings.

In the "Tiger," Nina was brought up. She was a pretty child from her earliest years, and received the caresses of all as a matter of course. She went to a good school, studied the piano and learnt dancing, and at sixteen put her hair up. She did as she was told without fuss, being apparently of a lethargic temperament; she had all the money and all the clothes that her heart could desire; she was happy, and in a quiet way she deemed herself a rather considerable item in the world. When she was eighteen, her mother died miserably of cancer, and it was discovered that the liabilities of Mrs. Malpas's estate exceeded its assets, and that the "Tiger" was mortgaged up to its value. The creditors were not angry; they attributed the state of affairs to illness and the absence of male control, and good-humouredly accepted what they could get. None the less, Nina, the child of luxury and sloth, had to start life with several hundreds of

* This name is pronounced with the accent on the first syllable, in the Five Towns.

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pounds less than nothing. Of her father, all trace had been long since lost. A place was found for her, and for over two years she saw the world from the office of a famous hotel in Doncaster. Her lethargy and an invaluable gift of adapting herself to circumstances saved her from any acute unhappiness in the Yorkshire town. Instinctively she ceased to remember the "Tiger" and past splendours. (Equally, if she had married a duke instead of becoming a book-keeper, she would have ceased to remember the "Tiger" and past humility.) Then, by good or ill fortune, she had the offer of a situation at the Hôtel Majestic, Strand, London. The Majestic and the sights thereof woke up the sleeping soul.

Before her death, Mrs. Malpas had told Nina many things about the vanished Lemuel; among others, the curious detail that he had two small moles, one hairless, the other hirsute, close together on the underside of his right wrist. Nina had seen precisely such marks of identification on the right wrist of Mr. Lionel Belmont.

She was convinced that Lionel Belmont was her father. There could not be two men in the world so stamped by Nature. She perceived that in changing his name he had chosen Lionel because of its similarity to Lemuel. She felt certain, too, that she had noticed vestiges of the Five Towns accent beneath his Americanisms. But apart from these reasons, she knew by a superrational instinct that Lionel Belmont was her father. It was not the call of blood, but the positiveness of a woman asserting that a thing is so because she is sure it is so.

III.

NINA was not of an imaginative disposition. The romance of this extraordinary encounter made no appeal to her. She was the sort of girl that constantly reads novelettes, and yet always, with fatigued scorn, refers to them as "silly." Stupid little Nina was intensely practical at heart, and it was the practical side of her father's reappearance that engaged her birdlike mind. She did not stop to reflect that truth is stranger than fiction. Her tiny heart was not agitated by any ecstatic ponderings upon the wonder and mystery of Fate. She did not feel strangely drawn towards Lionel Belmont, nor did she feel that he supplied a something which had always been wanting to her.

On the other hand, her pride—and Nina was very proud—found much satisfaction in the fact that her father, having turned up, was so fine, handsome, dashing, good-humoured, and wealthy. It was well, and excellently well, and delicious, to have a father like that. The possession of such a father opened up vistas of a future so enticing and glorious that her present career became instantly loathsome to her. It suddenly seemed impossible that she could have tolerated the existence of a hotel clerk for a single week. Her eyes were opened, and she saw, as many women have seen, that luxury was an absolute necessity to her. All her ideas soared with the magic swiftness of the beanstalk. And at the same time she was terribly afraid—unaccountably afraid to confront Mr. Belmont and tell him that she was his Nina. He was entirely unaware that he had a Nina.

"I'm your daughter! I know by your moles!"

She whispered the words in her tiny heart and felt sure that she could never find courage to say them aloud to that great and important man. The announcement would be too monstrous, incredible, and absurd. People would laugh. He would laugh. And Nina could stand anything better than being laughed at. Even supposing she proved to him his paternity—she thought of the horridness of going to lawyers' offices—he might decline to recognise her. Or he might throw her fifty pounds a year, as one throws sixpence to an importunate crossing-sweeper, to be rid of her. The United States existed in her mind chiefly as a country of highly remarkable divorce laws, and she thought that Mr. Belmont might have married again. A fashionable and arrogant Mrs. Belmont, and a dazzling Miss Belmont, aged possibly eighteen, might arrive, both of them steeped in all conceivable luxury, at any moment. Where would Nina be then, with her two-and-elevenpence-halfpenny blouse from Glave's?

Mr. Belmont, accompanied by Alphonse, the head waiter in the *salle-à-manger*, descended in the lift and crossed the hall to the portico, where he stood talking for a few seconds. Mr. Belmont turned and, as he conversed with Alphonse, gazed absently in the direction of the bureau. He looked straight through the pretty captive. After all, despite his superficial heartiness, she could be nothing to him—so rich, assertive, and truly important. A hansom was called for him, and he departed. She observed that he was in evening dress now.

No! Her cause was just; but it was too

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startling: that was what was the matter with it.

Then she told herself she would write to Lionel Belmont. She would write a letter that night.

At 9.30 she was off duty. She went upstairs to her perch in the roof and sat on her bed for over two hours. Then she came down again to the bureau with some bluish notepaper and envelopes in her hand, and in response to the surprised question of the pink-frocked colleague who had taken her place, she explained that she wanted to write a letter.

"You do look that bad, Miss Malpas," said the other girl, who made a speciality of compassion.

"Do I?" said Nina.

"Yes, you do. What have you got *on*, *now*, my poor dear?"

"What's that to you? I'll thank you to mind your own business, Miss Bella Perkins!"

Usually, Nina was not soon ruffled; but that night all her nerves were exasperated and exceedingly sensitive.

"Oh!" said the girl. "What price the Duchess of Doncaster? And I was just going to wish you a nice day to-morrow for your holiday, too!"

Nina seated herself at the table to write the letter. An electric light burned directly over her frizzy head. She wrote a weak but legible and regular back-hand. She hated writing letters, partly because she was dubious about her spelling, and partly because of an obscure but irrepressible suspicion that her letters were of necessity silly. She pondered for a long time and then wrote: "Dear Mr. Belmont,—I venture——" She made a new start: "Dear Sir,—I hope you will not think me——" And a third attempt: "My dear Father——" No! It was preposterous! It could no more be written than it could be said.

The situation was too much for simple Nina.

Suddenly the grand circular hall of the Majestic was filled with a clamour at once charming and fantastic. There was chattering of musical, gay American voices; pattering of elegant feet on the tesselated pavement; the unique, incomparable sound of the *frou-frou* of many frocks; and above all this the rich tones of Mr. Lionel Belmont. Nina looked up and saw her radiant father the centre of a group of girls—all young, all beautiful, all stylish, all with picture-hats, all self-possessed, all sparkling: doubtless the recipients of the dandy supper.

Oh, how insignificant and homicidal Nina felt!

"Thirteen of you!" exclaimed Lionel Belmont, pulling his superb moustache. "Two to a hansom—I guess I'll want six-and-a-half hansoms, boy!"

There was an explosion of delicious laughter, and the page-boy grinned, ran off, and began whistling in the portico like a vexed locomotive. The thirteen fair, shepherded by Lionel Belmont, passed out into the murmurous summer night of the Strand. Cab after cab drove up, and Nina saw that her father, after filling each cab, paid each cabman. In three minutes the dreamlike scene was over. Mr. Belmont re-entered the hotel, winked humorously at the occupant of the pagoda, ignored the bureau, and departed to his rooms.

Nina ripped her inchoate letters into small pieces, and with a tart "Good-night!" to Miss Bella Perkins, who was closing up her ledgers, the hour being close upon twelve-thirty, she passed sedately, stiffly, as though in performance of some vestal's ritual, up the grand staircase. Turning to the right at the first landing, she traversed a long corridor which was no part of the route to her cubicle on the ninth floor. This corridor was lighted by glowing sparks, which hung on yellow cords from the central line of the ceiling; underfoot was a heavy, but narrow, crimson-patterned carpet, with a strip of polished oak parquet on either side of it. Exactly along the central line of the carpet Nina tripped, languorously, like an automaton, and exactly over her head glittered the line of electric sparks. The corridor and the journey seemed to be interminable, and Nina on some inscrutable and mystic errand. At length she moved aside from the religious line, went into a service cabinet, and emerged with a small bunch of pass-keys. No. 107 was Lionel Belmont's sitting-room; No. 102, his bedroom, was opposite to No. 107. No. 108, another sitting-room, was, as Nina knew, unoccupied. She noiselessly let herself into No. 108, closed the door, and stood still. After a minute she switched on the light. These two rooms—Nos. 108 and 107—had once communicated: but as space grew precious with the growing success of the Majestic, they had been finally separated, and the door between them locked and masked by furniture. By reason of the door, Nina could hear Lionel Belmont moving to and fro in No. 107. She listened a long time; then, involuntarily, she yawned with fatigue.

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"Her father stood in the doorway."

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"How silly of me to be here!" she thought. "What good will this do me?"

She extinguished the light and opened the door to leave. At the same instant the door of No. 107, three feet off, opened. She drew back with a start of horror. Suppose she had collided with her father on the landing! Timorously she peeped out and saw Lionel Belmont, in his shirt-sleeves, disappear round the corner.

"He is going to talk with his friend, Mr. Pank," Nina thought, knowing that No. 120 lay at some little distance round that corner.

Mr. Belmont had left the door of No. 107 slightly ajar. An unseen and terrifying force compelled Nina to venture into the corridor and then to push the door of No. 107 wide open. The same force—not at all herself, quite beyond herself—seemed to impel her by the shoulders into the room. As she stood unmistakably within her father's private sitting-room, scared, breathing rapidly, inquisitive, she said to herself—

"I shall hear him coming back, and I can run out before he turns the corner of the corridor." And she kept her little pink ears alert.

She looked about the softly brilliant room—such an extravagant triumph of luxurious comfort as twenty years ago would have aroused comment even in Mayfair; but there were scores of similar rooms in the Majestic—no one thought twice of them. Her father's dress-coat was thrown arrogantly over a Louis Quatorze chair, and this careless flinging of the expensive shining coat across the gilded chair somehow gave Nina a more intimate appreciation of her father's grandeur and of the great and glorious life he led. She longed to recline indolently in a priceless tea-gown on the couch by the fireplace, and issue orders. . . . She approached the writing-table, littered with papers, documents in scores and hundreds. To the left was the brown bag; it was locked, and very heavy, she thought. To the right was a pile of telegrams. She picked up one and read:—

"*Pank, Grand Hotel, Birmingham. Why not burgle hotel? Simplest, most effective plan, and solves all difficulties.—Belmont.*"

She read it twice, crunched it in her left hand, and picked up another one:—

"*Pank, Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Your objection absurd. See safe in bureau at Majestic; quite easy; scene with girl second evening.—Belmont.*"

The thing flashed blindingly upon her. Her father and Mr. Pank belonged to the swell-mob of which she had heard and seen so much at Doncaster. She at once became the excessively knowing and suspicious hotel *employée* to whom every stranger is a rogue until he has proved the contrary. Had she lived through three St. Leger weeks for nothing? At the hotel at Doncaster, what they didn't know about thieves and sharpers was not knowledge. The landlord kept a loaded revolver in his desk there during the Week. And she herself had been provided with a whistle which she was to blow at the slightest sign of a row; she had blown it once, and seven policemen had appeared within thirty seconds. The landlord used to tell tales of masterly and huge scoundrelism that would make Charles Peace turn in his grave. And the landlord had ever insisted that no one—no one at all—could always distinguish with certainty between a real gent and a swell-mobsman.

So her father and Mr. Pank had deceived everyone in the hotel except herself, and they meant to rob the safe in the bureau to-morrow night! Of course, Mr. Lionel Belmont was a villain, or he would not have deserted her poor, dear mother; it was annoying, but indubitable. Even now he was maturing his plans round the corner with that Mr. Pank. Burglars always went about in shirt-sleeves. The brown bag contained the tools.

The shock was frightful, disastrous, tragic; but it had solved the situation by destroying it. Practically, Nina no longer had a father. He had existed for about four hours as a magnificent reality, full of possibilities; he now ceased to be recognisable.

She was about to pick up a third telegram when a slight noise caused her to turn swiftly; she had forgotten to keep her little pink ears alert. Her father stood in the doorway. He was certainly the victim of some extraordinary emotion. His face worked; he seemed at a loss what to do or say; he seemed pained, confused, even astounded. Simple, foolish Nina had upset the balance of his equations.

Then he resumed his self-control and came forward into the room, with a smile intended to be airy. Meanwhile Nina had not moved. One is inclined to pity the artless and defenceless girl in this midnight duel of wits with a shrewd, resourceful, and unscrupulous man of the world. But one's pity should not be lavished on an undeserving object. Though Nina trembled, she was

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mistress of herself. She knew just where she was and just how to behave. She was as impregnable as Gibraltar.

"Well," said Mr. Lionel Belmont, genially gazing at her pose, "you do put snap into it, anyway."

"Into what?" she was about to inquire, but prudently she held her tongue. Drawing herself up with the gesture of an offended and unapproachable queen, the little thing sailed past him, close past her own father, and so out of the room.

"'Get right into this hansom, Miss Malpas.'"

"Say!" she heard him remark. "Let's straighten this thing out, eh?"

But she heroically ignored him, thinking the while that with all his sins he was attractive enough. She still held the first telegram in her long, thin fingers.

So ended the nocturne.

IV.

At five o'clock the next morning, Nina's trifling nose was pressed against the window-pane of her cubicle. In the enormous slate roof of the Majestic are three rows of round windows, like portholes. Out of the highest one at the extremity of the left wing, Nina looked. From thence she could see five other vast hotels, and the yard of Charing Cross Station, with three night-cabs drawn up to the kerb, and a red van of W. H. Smith and Son disappearing into the station. The Strand was quite empty. It was a strange world of sleep and greyness and disillusion. Within a couple of hundred yards or so of her, thousands of people lay asleep, and they would all soon wake into the disillusion, and the Strand would wake, and the first omnibus of all the omnibuses would come along.

Never had simple Nina felt so sad and weary. She was determined to give up her father. She was bound to tell the manager of her discovery; for Nina was an honest servant, and she was piqued in her honesty. No one should know that Lionel Belmont was her father. . . . She saw before her the task of forgetting him and forgetting the rich dreams of which he had been the origin. She was once more a book-keeper with no prospects.

At eight, she saw the manager in the managerial room. Mr. Reuben was a young Jew, aged about thirty-four, with a cold but indestructibly polite manner. He was a great man and knew it; he had almost invented the Majestic.

She told him her news; it was impossible for foolish Nina to conceal her righteousness and her sense of her importance.

"Whom did you say, Miss Malpas?" asked Mr. Reuben.

"Mr. Lionel Belmont—at least, that's what he calls himself."

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"Calls himself, Miss Malpas?"

"Here's one of the telegrams."

Mr. Reuben read it, looked at little Nina, and smiled; he never laughed.

"Is it possible, Miss Malpas," said he, "that you don't know who Mr. Belmont and Mr. Pank are?" And then, as she shook her head, he continued in his impassive, precise way: "Mr. Belmont is one of the principal theatrical managers in the United States. Mr. Pank is one of the principal playwrights in the United States. Mr. Pank's melodrama, 'Nebraska,' is now being played at the Regency by Mr. Belmont's own American company. Another of Mr. Belmont's companies starts shortly for a tour in the provinces with the musical comedy 'The Dolmenico Doll.' I believe that Mr. Pank and Mr. Belmont are now writing a new melodrama, and as they have both been travelling, but not together, I expect that these telegrams relate to that melodrama. Did you suppose that safe-burglars wire their plans to each other like this?" He waved the telegram with a gesture of fatigue.

Silly, ruined Nina made no answer.

"Do you ever read the papers—the *Telegraph*, or the *Mail*, Miss Malpas?"

"N—no, sir."

"You ought to. Then you wouldn't be so ignorant and silly. A hotel clerk can't know too much. And, by the way, what were you doing in Mr. Belmont's room last night, when you found these wonderful telegrams?"

"I went there—I went there—to——"

"Don't cry, please. It won't help you. You must leave here to-day. You've been here three weeks, I think. I'll tell Mr. Smith to pay you your month's wages. You don't know enough for the Majestic, Miss Malpas. Or perhaps you know too much. I'm sorry. I had thought you would suit us. Keep straight, that's all I have to say to you. Go back to Doncaster, or wherever it is you came from. Leave before five o'clock. That will do."

With a godlike air, Mr. Reuben swung round his office-chair and faced his desk. He tried not to perceive that there was a mysterious quality about this case which he had not quite understood. Nina tripped piteously out.

In the whole of London, Nina had one acquaintance, and an hour or so later, after drinking some tea, she set forth to visit this acquaintance. The weight of her own foolishness, fatuity, silliness, and ignorance was heavy upon her. And, moreover, she had been told that Mr. Lionel Belmont had already departed back to America, his luggage being marked for the American Transport Line.

She was primly walking, the superlative of the miserable, past the façade of the hotel, when someone sprang out of a cab and spoke to her. And it was Mr. Lionel Belmont.

"Get right into this hansom, Miss Malpas," he said kindly, "and I guess we'll talk it out."

"Talk what out?" she thought. But she got in.

"Marble Arch, and go up Regent Street, and don't hurry," said Mr. Belmont to the cabman.

"How did he know my name?" she asked herself.

"A hansom's the most private place in London," he said after a pause.

It certainly did seem to her very cosy and private, and her nearness to one of the principal theatrical managers in America was almost startling. Her white frock with the black velvet decorations touched his grey suit.

"Now," he said, "I do wish you'd tell me why you were in my parlour last night. Honest!"

"What for?" she parried, to gain time. Should she begin to disclose her identity?

"Because—well, because—— Oh! look here, my girl, I want to be on very peculiar terms with you. I want to straighten out everything. You'll be sort of struck, but I'll be bound to tell you I'm your father! Now, don't faint or anything."

"Oh! I knew that!" she gasped. "I saw the moles on your wrist when you were registering. Mother told me about them. Oh! if I had only known you knew!"

They looked at one another.

"It was only the day before yesterday I found out I possessed such a thing as a daughter. I had a kind of fancy to go around to the old spot. This notion of me having a daughter struck me considerable, and I concluded to trace her and size her up at once." Nina was bound to smile. "So your poor mother's been dead three years?"

"Yes," said Nina.

"Ah! Don't let us talk about that. I feel I can't say just the right thing. . . . And so you know me by those pips." He pulled up his right sleeve. "Was that why you came up to my parlour?"

Nina nodded, and Lionel Belmont sighed with relief.

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"Why didn't you tell me at once, my dear, who you were?"

"I didn't dare," she smiled. "I was afraid. I thought you wouldn't——"

"Listen," he said. "I've wanted someone like you for years—years and years. I've got no one to look after——"

"Then why didn't *you* tell *me* at once who you were?" she questioned with adorable pertness.

"Oh!" he laughed. "How could I, plump, like that? When I saw you first in the bureau, the stricken image of your mother at your age, I was nearly down. But I came up all right, didn't I, my dear? I acted it out well, didn't I?"

* * * * *

The hansom was rolling through Hyde Park, and the sunshiny hour was eleven, in June. Nina looked forth on the gay and brilliant scene — rhododendrons, duchesses, horses, dandies — the incomparable wealth and splendour of the capital. She took a long breath and began to be happy for the rest of her life. She felt that, despite her plain frock, she was in this picture. Her father had told her that his income was rising on a hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year, and he would thank her to spend it. Her father had told her, when she had confessed the scene with Mr. Reuben and what led to it, that she had grit, and that the mistake was excusable, and that a girl as pretty as she was didn't want to be as fly as Mr. Reuben had said. Her father had told her that he was proud of her, and he had not been rude enough to laugh at her blunder.

She felt that she was about to enter upon the true and only vocation of a dainty little morsel—namely, to spend money earned by other people. She thought less homicidally now of the thirteen chorus girls of the previous night.

"Say!" said her father, "I sail this afternoon for New York, Nina."

"They said you'd gone, at the hotel."

"Only my baggage. The *Minnehaha* sails at five. I guess I want you to come along, too. On the voyage we'll get acquainted and tell each other things."

"Suppose I say I won't?" She spoke despotically, as the pampered darling should.

"Then I'll wait for the next boat. But it'll be awkward."

"Then I'll come. But I've got no things."

He pushed up the trap-door. "Driver, Bond Street. And get on to yourself, for goodness' sake! Hurry!"

"You told me not to hurry," grumbled the cabby.

"And now I tell you to hustle. See?"

"Shall you want me to call myself Belmont?" Nina asked.

"I chose it because it was a fine ten-horse-power name, twenty years ago," said her father, and she murmured that she liked the name very much.

As Lionel Belmont the Magnificent paid the cabman, and Nina walked across the pavement into one of the most famous repositories of expensive frippery in the world, she thrilled with the profoundest pleasure her tiny soul was capable of. Foolish, simple Nina had achieved the *ne plus ultra* of her languorous dreams.

ILLUMINATION.

OUT of the dark we came,
Into the light we go;
A sun that sees our shame,
An all-revealing flame,
A purifying glow.

Yet these, by passion stained,
And those, by frenzies torn,
Who life and hope disdained,
To curse, while strength remained,
The day when they were born,

Shall breathe with us the same
Blest air, Death's overthrow,
And the redeeming flame,
And the restoring glow:
Out of the dark they came,
Into the light they go.

HERBERT MORRAH.

Google

SEE-SAW WITH A 350-LB. KRUPP SHELL.

Taking a running leap, the performer alights with great force on his end of the board, which hurls the projectile into the air.

A HEAVY-WEIGHT JUGGLER.

By Édouard Charles.

JUGGLERS are common enough on the stage; the name of those who make pretty and clever play with anything varying in weight from a cigarette-paper to a pony-trap, and in shape from an umbrella to a table, is legion. In fact, ordinary clever acts of this kind are so common that they have almost ceased to draw, and certainly never "bring down the house" as in days gone by.

But there remains one man whose turn is undoubtedly novel. It never fails to hold the audience spellbound, thrill it as with an electric current, and draw for its performer appreciative enthusiasm. The reason of this is to be found in the fact that the juggling act of Paul Conchas is the most remarkable in the world, for he does not juggle with commonplace objects, contenting himself with nothing lighter than Krupp shells that turn the scales at over three hundredweight, and such awkward and heavy things as gun-carriages and Maxim guns!

HE THEN CATCHES IT ON HIS BACK.

It would be a pretty problem to work out with what force a 350-lb. shell, falling from the height of six feet, struck the person who caught it on the back of his neck. No man in the world should know or does know better than Herr Conchas, for he experiences the sensation a few times every evening. When I recently asked him the best way of arriving at the solution of the problem, he shook his head sadly and said the only way he could think of was that I should do the trick myself. He assured me my curiosity would be fully satisfied; moreover, that I could depend on getting the correct answer first time! He was even considerate enough to offer to lend me the shells he uses himself, so that there would be no doubt about the matter. Not possessing a cast-iron neck or a head for figures, I must leave readers to work out the answer for themselves. Conchas will oblige them at any time with the loan of a shell.

So far as Conchas is concerned, these heavy shells

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might be nothing more than soap-bubbles; a snowflake falling on the back of his neck would certainly cause him more discomfort than the 350-lb. projectile, though it would not hit him so hard. In performing the hair-raising feat of catching Krupp shells, as illustrated in our photographs, he takes a strong stick, six feet in length, into the slightly grooved top of which he lifts the shell. Most men cannot even do this. Then inch by inch he raises the stick until he can get it on to his forehead; there he balances the load. This in itself is a striking performance.

For thirty seconds, perhaps, he stands getting his breath, while he gazes at the shell above. Suddenly he gives the stick a blow that knocks it spinning across the stage, and down comes the three-hundredweight of solid steel. He watches it as it falls, watches till the very last instant, when it seems inevitable that the shell must smash flat his face, then he swiftly bends his head. There is a thud that sounds all over the house as the shell strikes flesh, for a second it seems that the man must be borne down by the force of the contact, and he sways a bit; but he stands firm, and then with a herculean effort he casts the shell behind him on to the stage, where it leaves its signature an inch deep.

CHANGING THE POSITION OF A 350-LB. KRUPP SHELL FROM THE LOWER STICK TO THE HIGHER ONE, AND VICE VERSA.

What would happen if the shell were caught half an inch lower on the neck than it should be, or if Conchas did not duck at exactly the right moment, is no problem; there certainly would be no Conchas! In the one case it would catch the top of his spinal cord and break his neck, in the other it would pulp his skull. That is as the onlooker sees it: but there is little real danger, for just ere the shell reaches its destination, Conchas throws up the wonderfully developed muscles of his shoulders, and so prevents the shell from falling on his vertebræ, and from this momentary rest it rolls into the groove of the neck.

CONCHAS RAISES A 350-LB. SHELL AND BALANCES IT ON HIS FOREHEAD. THEN, KNOCKING THE STICK AWAY, HE—

A remarkably difficult trick, calling for more than ordinary strength and courage, is illustrated in our first two photographs. In this a heavy Krupp shell is placed on one end of a board that acts as a see-saw. The performance of the feat is well-nigh as sensational as that previously described, though the tension on the nerves of beholders is not so acute.

The shell in position, Conchas makes a running leap and lands on the opposite end of the board, the result of the impetus being to hurl the shell into the air towards him when he

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alights on the ground. The next moment a sounding thwack announces that he has caught the weighty projectile on the small of his back!

When Conchas conceived the idea of this performance, he did not start right away practising with three-hundredweight shells. His first shell was a wooden one weighing no more than a couple of pounds, and he started by dropping it from the height of a couple of feet. For two years he continued practising, gradually increasing the height and weight, until a two-hundredweight shell had no terrors for him. Then he made his *début*. During his probationary period he received more hard knocks than he has ever had since, and often he had to give up for days on end, so bruised and swollen did his neck and back become; but he has never met with anything approaching a serious mishap.

Another exceedingly clever trick is that in which two sticks are used. He takes this couple of sticks grooved at their tops, but not more than a foot in height. Placing the shell on one stick, he balances it on his forehead; the other stick he leans against the first, its foot being on his chin. Then he deftly rolls the shell from the one stick to the other, a feat calling for absolute equilibrium and finesse of neck movement. A miss in this act would assuredly flatten his features.

GETS READY TO RECEIVE THE SHELL ON THE NECK, WATCHING ITS DESCENT UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT.

After Krupp shells he turns to a gun-carriage, a most ungainly object to balance. He takes it to pieces and fixes it together so that on the wheel, which he rests on his forehead, the axle stands upright, supporting at its top the other wheel, revolving.

The whole weighs just under 300 lb., and while the top wheel is turning rapidly in one direction, he spins the bottom one on his head in the opposite direction. The nastiest accident that ever occurred to him resulted from the breaking of the axle one evening. The top wheel smashed his head, and he took an eight weeks' rest in hospital.

IN THIS REMARKABLE FEAT WITH THREE 56-LB. CANNON BALLS, THE SOLID SPHERES ARE BALANCED AS HERE SHOWN. THEN, THE SUPPORT BEING KNOCKED AWAY, THEY—

Juggling with awkward, heavy things is his delight; and another of the feats he performs consists in lifting a twelve-stone man who is seated at an awning-covered table on a chair, and carrying the collection round the stage, balancing the whole by one leg of the chair. The act works all right if the man in the chair looks after his part of the business, which is to assist in the balancing while pretending to evince dismay at his exalted position; if he does not, there are great and unexpected possibilities in it. They were fully developed one night at a Continental theatre, for man, table, and chair went over the footlights with a suddenness as startling as it was unpleasant to everybody concerned, particularly the orchestra and the

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ARE CAUGHT IN THIS FASHION.

man in the chair. It took several minutes to sort out t'other from which, but fortunately the result was nothing more serious than a couple of smashed violins.

Concerning this particular trick Conchas tells an amusing story. During one of his visits to Buenos Ayres, a young man in the audience loudly proclaimed his disbelief in the genuineness of the weight of the combination as declared by the performer. The sceptical individual himself weighed a matter of twelve stone, and challenged Conchas to lift him with the table—even going so far in his enthusiasm as to wager *mein Herr* a case to a bottle of sparkling champagne that he couldn't do it. Though it was rather above the weight Conchas was lifting, he readily took him on.

The sequel was amusing for everyone but the confident person. He took his seat in the chair and was hoisted aloft. He was carried around the stage, and admitted himself convinced. He had paid twelve bottles to go up, but he had not bargained for the descent. He reluctantly paid another dozen to avoid coming down—with a rattle!

JUGGLING WITH SIX 56-LB. CANNON-BALLS.

Conchas also juggles with two loaded rifles of regulation weight—which he fires off as he catches—and a couple of bayonets; he parades around the stage with a soldier on his chin, and the soldier beats a drum the while; he also catches in the back of the neck 56-lb. cannon-balls that are hurled at him by his assistant. Missing would mean attending a funeral at which he would play the most important part. A trick that he has erased from his list was the catching of cannon-balls in a scooped-out, padded, brass helmet, which he wore on his head; and the balls were fired from a real cannon, with a charge of powder behind them!

Conchas well recalls the first time he tried it. Never had he practised it ere he performed in public, for though he

LOADED RIFLES FIRED AS CAUGHT.

AS A CONTRAST, THE PERFORMER JUGGLES WITH FIVE MILITARY CAPS.

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had tried his best to do so, he could not get his courage up to sticking-point. Still, he was billed to appear in this act, and appear he had to. As an instance of the staying power a contract gives one, the non-fulfilment of which contract would mean heavy damages *contre lui*, it only remains to be stated that Conchas on the eventful night took his courage in both hands, put on his cup-fitted hat of brass, and made his bow on the stage. It was arranged that the gun should be fired at the word "Three!" from him. Hitherto he had never been able to give voice to it. He did not know what to expect when the ball struck him, but he preferred an accident, or even death, to laughter, which failure would have provoked; so he got past "One!" on to "Two!" and then after a moment's pause, "Three!" and ere he knew it the cannon-ball was in the helmet, and rounds of applause were ringing in his ears. He confesses it was the most trying ordeal of his life; and though he caught cannon-balls with his head for years afterwards, he never experienced such an uncomfortable five minutes as on that premier occasion.

He has retained, however, several sensational tricks with steel balls weighing no less than 56 lb. apiece. With cannon-balls of this weight he can juggle as easily as with light military caps. He juggles with six of the former—that is to say, with a matter of 3 cwt. of solid metal; then does the same thing with five military caps, whose aggregate weight is not more than two-and-a-half or three pounds. It is a contrast with a vengeance, and serves to show how keenly his judgment of weight and his sense of calculation in the matter of the impetus to be imparted to the differing objects has been developed.

He also catches cannon-balls that are thrown to him by an assistant from a distance of some feet—not in the hand, but just behind the head. He watches their coming as they rapidly pour upon him, ducks his head just in time to catch the foremost, hurls it behind into the wings, and is ready for the next. But probably his smartest feat with these weighty spheres is that in which he raises a trio of them on a three-forked stick, and balances the lot on his teeth, well above his head. They constitute 1½ cwt. of metal, bear in mind. Then he knocks the support away, bends his body, throws forward his head, and puts up his arms, and down come the balls—one on the neck, another on his right shoulder, and the third on his left.

FOLLOWERS.

IN the morning early,
Laughter on his lips,
Through the dewdrops pearly
Love comes and sips.

After him the herds are,
After him the bees,
After him the birds are
Tuning in the trees.

But when in the hollows
Your feet trip the dew,
Love, he ups and follows,
He goes after you!

LAURENCE HOUSMAN.

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THE GARDEN OF LIES.

By JUSTUS MILES FORMAN,*

Author of "Journeys End," "Monsigny," etc.

CHAPTER XXI.

E took our last dinner together that evening at Voisin's, in the Rue St. Honorè. It was not a very cheerful meal, though I think we all did our best to make it so, forced a gaiety that we were far from feeling, cracked our best little jokes with a sorry grin that deceived nobody.

We had one of the small upstair rooms to ourselves, and we sat long over the wine, for it was not till midnight that the two travellers must be gone, and there were hours to while away.

I remember that we fell to telling tales, as men sitting together will. Old MacKenzie called up strange happenings from his youth in the hospitals of London and Edinburgh, horrible things to freeze one's blood. Von Altdorf had stories of marvellous dealings down in that hotbed of intrigue which we called the Balkans—bargains that were made by crowned heads, and compacts that were broken, villainies that were winked at by imperial eyes. And Denis, who had been in more queer corners of the earth and had seen more of men and women, more of fighting and conspiracy, than all of us put together, made our blood rise—aye, and the hair on our scalps stand up, too—with what had come to his eyes and ears. It was a memorable night. I shall never forget it. Nay, I've spent hours by the score thinking of it since, going over all that happened, seeing us all as we sat there together, about the square table littered with glasses and bottles and ash-trays and petits verres, rosy-red or white and innocent-looking.

I can see old MacKenzie, huge and unwieldy, at the end of the table, his great, square head nodding through the smoke-wreaths, his face a bit redder as the dinner went on, for he was a good trencherman, MacKenzie. I can see the Prince, pale and handsome—now that he was sitting and the insignificance of his figure was hidden—his thick, black hair fallen a little over his forehead, fiercely moustached, smoking cigarettes by the score, till the burnt ends filled and overflowed the little tray before him. I see Von Altdorf, strong and keen and sombre-eyed, his weather-beaten face full of those lines that knowledge of good and evil, experience of the world's vicissitudes, storm, and stress are wont to draw. And, more clearly than all, I see Denis. He is leaning forward, with his elbows upon the table. A cigarette burns neglected in his fingers. He is telling us a tale of strange piracy about Pekin and Tientsin, and that whimsical mouth of his is twisted in its inimitable way, a bit to one side with the telling. It smiles humorously, but the eyes above are dark and sombre—like Colonel von Altdorf's—with too great knowledge of pain and bitterness, and the straight line between his brows seems never smoothed away. His hair—as I see it—is tumbled a bit awry over the forehead, as with a careless hand. His fine head is reared high over the broad shoulders, high and proud—but I see always the tragic eyes. Poor old Denis!

It was about half-past eleven when we left the table—I think it cost us all a little pang—and drove to the Gare de l'Est. The luggage had been sent on ahead of us, and a compartment reserved. Then, once in the station and everything in readiness, we spent the last ten minutes in walking up and down the narrow quay beside the train, saying our last words. The Prince was with Colonel von Altdorf and Sir Gavin, giving them, no doubt, his parting requests and orders regarding the Princess Eleanor. I walked alone with Denis, his arm thrown over my shoulder.

"I don't like your going!" I cried bitterly. "I wish you could stay, or I could go with you!"

"Ah, lad," said he, "I wish it, too—that I might stay, or you go with me; but you must stay, for you've ties to bind you, and I—why,

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I must go. It's my only chance to—to serve her further, Teddy, you know that, and I daren't trust myself to stay. I can do some good work là-bas, before I'm snuffed out. Here I could do nothing—but drink myself to death probably. Ah, yes, I must go, Ted."

"But you'll come back, Denis?" said I eagerly. "You'll come back, of course?"

He turned me a bit, his arm about my shoulders, so that I looked into his eyes.

"Why, no, dear lad," said he with a little smile; "no, I shan't come back. We won't meet again, Teddy." And my heart went down in me like lead, for I knew that there was no winning him from his resolve.

"If I can help to set her firm upon the throne beside her husband," he went on, "if I can help to save Novodnia for him and for her, it will be a finish worth while, Ted, a finish not to be ashamed of; but it must be the finish, lad! There must be no mistake about that, no anti-climax."

He pulled me closer with his arm as we walked far up the narrow quay. "And, meantime," said he, "meantime you'll—you'll look after her? You'll see that no harm comes to her? Oh, of course, MacKenzie and Von Altdorf are here for that. It's their business; but I—well, I suppose I'm a silly old woman, and——"

"I'll look after her, Denis," said I. "No harm shall come to her, you may be sure of that."

"Why!" cried Denis, giving me a little shake with the arm that lay over my shoulders, "why, that's a dear old chap! You see, I can—well, say things to you, Teddy, that I couldn't say to old Sir Gavin or even to Von Altdorf, and—she's all there is to me. I think of nothing else."

Then for awhile we walked in silence, Denis thinking, I know, of the woman he loved, and I sick at heart over his leaving me. Steam from the engines hissed and wreathed about us. There was the smell of oil and smoke and machinery everywhere. Our two shadows, cast by the great arc-lights overhead, sprawled and wavered and danced grotesquely before our feet. Porters with luggage for the van dodged past us, breathless and hurried, and passengers for the train rushed up and down the platform, looking for vacant compartments.

"And there's nothing else, Denis?" I asked, "nothing else that I can do—no business to settle, no one to see?"

"No, lad, no," said he. "I've few ties, Heaven knows—— Wait, though! Colette! Oh, Teddy, Teddy, it sends a stab through me whenever I think of what that girl did! I'll write to her, but do you go and look her up once in a way, Ted. She's not well. Indeed, I fear she's grievously ill, and she's poorly provided for. She—loved me once, poor child! She played me false, as they've all done, some time or other; but I think—I think she loved me through it all. Who's to gauge a woman's motives? And Heaven knows she made amends most terribly! Come, they're closing the doors. The train will be off directly."

We rejoined the others, who stood at the door of the reserved compartment, and Denis wrung the hands of each of us.

"It's likely that we shan't meet again," said he, with his old sweet smile, "MacKenzie, and you, Colonel, and Teddy. Good old friends! Aye, the truest friends I've ever known! We've had a good time together, and none of us will ever quite forget it. Good-bye! Good-bye, all of you! You shall hear what we do là-bas. What, Teddy! sour and glum? Ah, none o' that, dear lad! Give us a smile at parting! Good-bye!"

The guards ran along the train, slamming doors and crying their last "En voiture, m'sieurs et dames!" and directly the long train pulled slowly out of the Gare de l'Est.

I saw a waving hand, two of them, from the window behind which sat the Prince of Novodnia and Denis Mallory. The hands were lost in a steam-wreathed distance. I saw the rear lights of the train, and watched them till they, too, disappeared in the night beyond. Then I turned with a heavy, bitter heart and a drooping head, back to the waiting-rooms and the street, with Von Altdorf and old MacKenzie.

Colonel von Altdorf turned his head for a last look into the lantern-starred gloom which had swallowed up the train. "Yonder goes a man!" said he—"aye, and a brave gentleman!" And old MacKenzie, plodding heavily beside him, croaked an inarticulate assent. But I answered nothing. I was too sore at heart, for I knew that I should never again—on this side the grave, at least—set eyes upon the man I loved above all men.

CHAPTER XXII.

I WOULD be as brief as possible in speaking of the days that followed the departure of the Prince of Novodnia and Denis Mallory, for it was a time of inaction, and must be of

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"I walked alone with Denis, his arm thrown over my shoulder."

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small interest. We had, in due time, a despatch from Vienna, telling us that the travellers had safely reached that point in their journey; then, later, one from Belgrade; and at last, to our great relief, from Novodni, the capital of Novodnia, stating, in few words, that the end was reached, and in time they hoped to check the advance of the Pavelovitch forces and to repair—to some extent, at least—the harm wrought upon the country.

I find it difficult to write of these days, for, as I have said, it was a time of inaction, and the trifling events that filled our hours and absorbed our activities seem, now that I go over them in preparation for setting them upon paper, of small moment, immaterial and irrelevant to the tale I have striven to tell.

Yet one thing I must set down. I had moved my belongings from my old quarters in the Boulevard Montparnasse to Denis's studio, partly for the simple satisfaction of living where he and I had been so much together, and to prevent the rooms falling into strange hands; partly that I might be nearer the old convent where I spent many hours with MacKenzie and Von Altdorf and Miss Mannering, and, indeed, sometimes with the Princess, though she still kept much aloof from us all.

Well, as I say, I had taken the studio, and sat there one morning with Colonel von Altdorf, talking over, as was our wont, that famous night's work in the rescue of the Princess, when Von Altdorf cried out—

"But, by Our Lady, man! I'd give something to know what became of those rascals afterwards!—whether the fellow we revived was able to care for the others, and what they did for Steinbrücke's body. There must have been an awkward situation with that clay on their hands."

"I'd jolly well like to go and find out!" said I, laughing a little, "if it weren't too much like putting one's head in the lion's mouth. Gad! I've never walked the streets since without turning cold every time a step came up behind me, for fear it might be an 'agent,' on my track for murder. I know exactly how a criminal at large feels. It would be a lark to go there and ask a few questions, though!"

"Well," said the Colonel slowly, "why not? After all, it would be safe enough. The concierge doesn't know you from Adam; and even if one of those ruffians should be about, which isn't probable, he wouldn't dare say a word. They've as good reasons as we, or better, for not wanting the affair to leak out. Why not go? You can be a harmless student looking for rooms, like Denis."

"By Jove!" I cried. "It sounds easy enough! I might reconnoitre a bit, anyhow. I'll do it right away now, this morning, before I weaken. Where's my hat? Will you wait here? I shall be back in an hour."

I caught up my hat and stick and went quickly out, laughing still at the sheer audacity of the thing. I took a cab as far as the Avenue du Maine, but dismissed it at the impasse, and walked in, with—I must confess—some inward qualms now that I was on the very ground, for my quest might well turn out a very dangerous bit of folly.

The fat, grey-haired old concierge was sitting on a stool outside her lodge, in the sunshine, cutting up vegetables for a soup, with a great earthen bowl in her lap. She gave me a smile of welcome, for she was a merry old soul, and I asked her if there were any vacant studios, suites for choice, in the building. The concierge raised a pair of expressive hands to heaven.

Studios? But yes, parbleu! More studios than she wished. This year, Heaven knew, she had had pas de chance! There seemed to be no étudiants in Paris, and for result, voilà three grands ateliers empty on her hands, to say nothing of the sculptors' sheds! Would Monsieur desire to look at one beautiful suite, but beautiful, voyez-vous, and si commode! It had been, only two days since, vacated.

"Ah!" said I inwardly, "now we're getting to the matter!"

Why, yes, possibly later, Monsieur would go up and have a look at the rooms, but he would be glad to know first what they were like.

Bien, they were a studio, carré, quite large, with sidelight, a sleeping-room and petite cuisine. There was also another sleeping-room beyond the studio, if one wished it, though it did not properly belong to the suite.

"That's it!" I cried again inwardly. "That's the one! Vacated, eh? So they've made off!"

But surely such a suite should not lack occupants! Was it possible that it must go begging?

The protesting hands again appealed to heaven.

What would you? As one had said before, there seemed to be no students in Paris. Oh, to be sure, there had been occupants of the suite, but only for quinze jours, and, voyez-vous—this with a lowered voice and confidentially nodding head—

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voyez-vous, strange occupants, if one should ask—Allemands by their look, four messieurs and one woman, une grande dame, like a queen! One had said she was the sister of the monsieur with the eyeglass, but—a shrug here and a droop of the eyelid—that was as one liked to call it. Aye, strange company! What would Monsieur say, for example, of a quarrel among the four Allemands one night, over the lady, sans doute, a quarrel si féroce that it left bloodstains on the floor—yes, yes, to be sure, they had tried to scrub them out, but one knew bloodstains for all that!—si féroce that every one of the messieurs was in bandages the next morning, and one, mon Dieu, one so near the point of death that he was carried down to a fiacre like a dead man, save for his cursings in some foreign tongue, and driven away to a hospital probably?

I think I nearly cried out at this. Von Steinbrücke wasn't dead, after all, then!

Dangerous lodgers indeed, one would say, I hastened to assure her, with the proper amount of horror. And the house well rid of them. It would seem to be a case for the police. But the lady? Did she leave with the others?

Another inimitably French shrug.

Ah! Monsieur arrived at the point! What would Monsieur think of the lady's complete disappearance the night of the quarrel? But complete, voyez-vous! She had never been seen since, nor the young woman who was her maid. Si, one saw strange things from time to time when one was a concierge, but none so strange as this. No more Allemands for 18bis Impasse du Maine! Mon Dieu! they might be anarchists. One might be blown out of one's bed some fine night! No; no more Allemands! Would Monsieur care to go up and look at the rooms?

I had found out all I wanted to know, but to oblige the old woman I went up to the bare and dismantled rooms and listened to much unnecessary information as to their desirability. It gave me, upon my word, something of a thrill to stand again on the spot where I had fought my long battle with that villain Steinbrücke, to go through the little passage where we had made our first attack, and where Von Altdorf had so nearly come to grief; but I was glad, at last, to get away from the place—it smelled of tragedy—and out once more into the warm spring sunshine, leaving the old concierge smiling and delighted with a gold louis.

As I have said, we saw, in these days, little of the Princess Eleanor, for she kept much by herself, solitary and queenly, brooding over her grief and injury, her wrecked love, and, as she believed, her blighted life. She passed her time reading or idle in her own apartments, or walked through the great garden in a tragic isolation that no one dared brave.

I was glad to perceive, however, that as the days and weeks went by, she showed an increasing desire for the company of her cousin, Miss Mannering, and that the coldness between them seemed in a fair way to disappear altogether. Towards Sir Gavin, Von Altdorf, and myself she was ever courteous and considerate, but never familiar. She maintained always a certain barrier of formality, an evidence constantly in view that she found herself unable to forgive the injury we had done her.

And now that I may look back upon it all dispassionately, with the impartial clearness that Time gives to the eye, I cannot feel any of the resentment, any of the anger that filled me in those days at her seeming blindness to the fact that what we had done had been done for her own good—to save her life, indeed, and greatly to our discomfort.

I can see now, as in those days I would not see, that a woman may hold the saving of her life cheaply beside the wrecking of that life's happiness in the cruellest fashion possible.

I can see how she must have suffered, what unspeakable agonies of shame and despair and hopelessness she must have endured at having the promise of a very heaven upon earth, a passion of love too great for words, held to her lips only to be dashed away when she was about to drink. Aye, I can see now that few women have suffered so, and I wonder little at her resentment towards those who had brought grief and shame upon her.

Still, for some reason—indeed, I know not what—towards me, among the three of us, she seemed to cherish least ill-will. It seemed to afford her a certain pleasure to talk with me when we met by chance in the garden, as sometimes occurred, for I walked there now and then in the cool shade.

I remember that it was at our first meeting in the garden she learned from me of Denis's departure with the Prince of Novodnia.

I had been walking up and down one of the gravel paths under the acacias, puffing at my pipe and wondering what was forward at the seat of war—we had that morning received the despatch from Novodni telling us that the Prince and Denis were safely

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arrived—I was wondering what would be the first steps taken to check Georgias and his horde in their advance upon the capital, when I saw the Princess Eleanor coming down from the house, with a book under her arm. I could not have retreated unseen, and so I waited, bowing, hat in hand, and apologised for my trespass upon the ground where I had no right to be.

But the Princess gave me a little, faint smile and begged me to walk there whenever I might choose.

"Indeed," said she, seating herself in the long steamer-chair that had been set for her, "indeed, I was a bit lonely, a bit at a loss for something to do, someone to talk with. Jessica is in the house with—with Colonel von Altdorf," and she paused to smile amusedly, a bit wistfully. "Moreover," she went on, "I have long wanted to ask about—those ruffians in the Impasse du Maine. What has become of them? What happened after I—after we came away? You were fighting, I remember, with their leader—Herr von Steinbrücke, is it not?—and Colonel von Altdorf with another man. I trust you took no harm, no wound?"

"Why, no, madame," said I, with a little, embarrassed laugh, "none at all; though I confess it was an accident brought me out of my own encounter."

"And the—men?" she demanded.

"Why," I cried, turning a bit red, "we don't know about them"—for this was before I had made my inquiries in the impasse. We wounded them all, and—well, as for Steinbrücke, we've reason to think he'll fight no more."

"He's — dead?" she cried in a half-whisper.

"I'm afraid so, madame," said I. "But he well deserved it, so don't waste your pity upon him. It was a better death than he merited."

She sat for a little time silent, her mind, I know, going over that night's work—over her long suspense, the attack, her peril from the fellow who would have killed her, and finally her rescue.

"And your—and Mr. Mallory?" she asked presently in a low voice that she strove to render casual, ordinary. "I hear nothing of him. I trust he has not left your company. I owe him thanks for my rescue." She kept her eyes down, but I think her breath waited for my answer.

"Denis?" I cried amazed. "Denis? Why, madame, you surely knew? They must have told you? Denis has gone with the Prince! They reached Novodni last night. He's gone to help save the country!"

She looked up swiftly, with a white face and parted lips. Her eyes were full of terror.

"He's — gone — down there?" she whispered. "He's gone with—the Prince? He's going—to fight for—Novodnia?"

Then all at once she seemed to realise that she was showing her excitement too plainly, for she lowered her eyes and paused a moment to control her voice, so that it was cold and fairly steady when she spoke again.

"Indeed, I wonder that I—was not told," said she. "Not that it is of any consequence to me," she hastened to add, "but I should have liked to send my thanks—nay, my real gratitude—to this—gentleman for his service. I wonder that he should choose to go with the Prince, since the quarrel is none of his. I presume the mere love of fighting draws him."

"Madame!" I cried warmly, "the bravest gentleman in Europe was not drawn into a petty Balkan squabble for love of fighting! He went there because it was his only means of serving you further. I wonder that you who know him can do him such injustice! He has gone to Novodnia to lend all his skill and strength to seating Prince Karl firmly once more upon his throne, and you beside him; and doing this, he means to lose his own life. He will not, if he can avoid it, come out of the war alive." And I told her how Denis had begged the Prince to let him go, and I told her what he had said to me on the platform at the station, how his last words had been to urge me to watch over her. Nay, I went further, angered beyond restraint at her speech. I told her how he had laboured and grown white and ill during that week of her imprisonment, and of how he had planned the attack upon the Impasse du Maine and borne the fiercest of the fighting. I went back further and told her what I knew of his struggles with temptation, with himself, when he had used to see her daily in the garden—how he had to fight a stern battle to play his part with honour; how easy it would have been for him to carry her off and defy us all, but how he would not do it. I told her how he had loathed the deceit he had to practise; how both Von Altdorf and I had seen him fighting his battle alone after he had come from her. I told her something of how he had given up absinth, and what it had cost him, and of what I had found late one night when

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I came in from my chance interview with Steinbrücke, the night after Denis had seen her in the garden for the last time, and she had told him what she thought him. I told her how the Prince had forced a fight with Denis, and how Denis had spared his life.

And so I went on, defending the man I loved, telling her how we all—old Mackenzie, Colonel von Altdorf, the Prince, all of us—had come to think of him as the noblest, most unselfish gentleman we had ever known. And the Princess, eyes upon the ground, hands gripped tensely in her lap, listened with never a word of protest—nay, with a sort of eagerness, I'll swear; a breathlessness that mutely prayed me go on when I paused for breath.

I was, at the moment, too angry to notice little signs, too hurt to observe significant things; but now, as I go over the scene in my mind, I can picture her, flushed, silent, listening, full of an eagerness that she would not manifest, hungry for words and praises of the man she loved, but ever forcing herself to the cold indifference in which her pride must cloak itself.

And when I had made an end of speaking, stammering for very want of words, flushed and unstrung, she only stirred in her chair with a little semblance of weariness and raised her gloomy eyes for an instant to mine.

"Indeed, sir," she said coldly, "this gentleman seems to stand in no lack of friends to defend him. I have no wish to dispute you. I remember him only as one who wronged and shamed me cruelly—— May we not speak of something else?"

But I sprang to my feet red and angry.

"If he wronged you, madame," I cried, "it was to save your life! If he seemed to do a dishonourable thing, it was because he held your safety higher than his honour. And if all this is not enough, he saved your life a second time, and is giving his own at this very moment for your sake! I beg your leave to go, madame!"

The Princess looked up swiftly and half stretched out her hand to me. Her eyes were wide and pleading, and her lip quivered.

"Ah, no, no! Don't go, Mr. Creighton!" she begged very low. "I don't mean to——"

"I beg your leave to go, Princess!" said I again, for I was very angry.

"Why, very well, sir," said she faintly, and sank back once more in her chair. "I would not have you go; but if you must—why, I won't stop you. Only—only remember that you are always—welcome here—in the garden—I shall always be—glad to see you." And I marched stiffly away, saying to myself that it would be a very long time before I should walk again in the old convent garden.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WAITING - waiting—waiting. That seems to me, as I look back, to have been the burden of those days and weeks that dragged so interminably and left us with no record of action or accomplishment. Waiting for what? I know not, save for news from the South, and of news there was all too little. I had a letter from Denis—it is before me now—written a week or so after his arrival in Novodni. It told vaguely of plans afoot or perfected for the defence of the capital, for the division of the attacking army by drawing a part of its strength away towards the north to protect its own communications. It told of measures passed by the Prince to gain the favour and support of an uncertain populace; of the Prince's calm, brave bearing in the face of danger; and of his own delight at the prospect of again smelling powder and sleeping under a tent. And at the very end of the letter, one little paragraph that bespoke the old Denis. "You'll guard her well, dear lad? You'll let no harm reach her? You'll write me of her now and then—how she looks, if she's well, if she seems happier? That's all that matters, you know—that she shall be well and happy."

I spoke of the letter to the Princess when I saw her next in the garden; for with the passing of my first anger I had given up my resolve not to meet her again, and so talked with her often, striving as best I might to shift her thoughts from unpleasant things to ordinary matters, the cheerful matters of every day.

But when I told her of the letter's end, quoted his words as nearly as I could, the Princess bent her head very low, and the hands in her lap trembled. Then presently she asked some little questions that started me talking again of him.

I think I was stupid enough, in those days, not to notice that when I was with her, our talk, however begun, managed always to fall upon Denis Mallory—my talk, that is, for the Princess said no word of him, only listened, face turned away. I suppose it was because my mind was so full of him that speaking my thoughts seemed but natural. I suppose that is why it never occurred to

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me that we talked of little else—that if we spoke of the other matters, some hint, some question of hers, indirectly put, brought him back.

I told her—indeed, I must have told it many times over—of the first evening in the Café d'Alençon, when we chose Denis to play the Prince's part before her. I told her of every incident that followed, from that time to the last dinner at Voisin's and the parting at the Gare de l'Est. I told her such adventures of his as I happened to know, adventures afield and afloat, wars in strange countries, filibustering and looting, and searching for abandoned mines. And the Princess Eleanor listened, face turned away, speaking no word.

So we waited, inactive, idle, hoping for tidings that would set our minds at rest and give us a definitely marked future for which to make arrangements; fearing things that we would not admit to each other—nay, not even to ourselves.

Colonel von Altdorf had news from time to time—now a despatch telling in cipher of some new movement, now a letter from someone high among Prince Karl's advisers, from the Prince himself, or, as in one instance, from Denis.

And ever, as information came to him, as the situation became clearer and the strength and mobility of the opposing forces were made plain, Von Altdorf's brows grew lower and lower and the line of his mouth more stern. He said nothing to me—nor, I believe, to anyone; but I knew that the gloomiest forebodings filled his heart, and that the welfare of Novodnia lay in desperate straits.

But just at this time something occurred that for a while took my mind from warfare and led it into a very different channel.

Returning to the Rue Boissonade one morning from the other side of the river, I found a young lad waiting at the lodge of the concierge, that canny old body having refused to trust him alone in the studio. The lad explained that he was from Mademoiselle Olivier, who was very ill and wished to see me at once.

"Mlle. Olivier? Now, who the dickens is Mlle. Olivier? I don't know any Mlle. Olivier! You've come to the wrong place, mon vieux."

But the lad insisted: "Mais si, Mlle. Oliver! Mlle. Colette Olivier!" She demanded to see me because I was the friend of Monsieur St. Denis! I must come at once.

"Ah!" I cried. "Mlle. Colette, eh? Why didn't you say so before? Come along!"

We took a fiacre, in which the lad sat beside me, stiffly upright, awed and silent at such splendour, and drove across the Boulevard Montparnasse and down the familiar old Boul' Miche' till we came to one of the narrow little side-streets near the Musée de Cluny.

Here there were interminable stairs to climb—dark stairs, none too clean, past doors whence came an odour of cooking, a clatter of dishes, household squabblings. Then, at the very top of all, a door where the lad knocked softly and called through the key-hole—

"C'est moi! moi avec Monsieur!"

A young woman came out upon the landing—the ordinary type of Boul' Miche' young woman, though with a certain unfamiliar gentleness of bearing, a soft moisture in her eyes, an utter and strange lack of coquetry.

She closed the door after her, and from behind it came a sound of hoarse coughing, of little moans in a faint voice.

"C'est Monsieur Creighton?" asked the young woman, "l'ami de St. Denis?"

"Why, yes," said I, "yes, I'm Creighton. And Mlle. Colette? She's ill, poor child! Can I do anything? St. Denis would have me care for her in any way possible, I know."

"Hélas, monsieur!" said the young woman, "none of us may care for her long! She's very, very ill; but she *would* see you before—before it's too late, because you were the friend of St. Denis. She would give you messages for him. Will you come in, monsieur? But do not stay long—she is so weak! She must not be tired!"

I went into the room, and the young woman closed the door softly after me, remaining outside.

It was a very small room, hot and close and stifling from the tiny stove in the corner that filled it with fumes of coke. The window was closed tight.

The girl in the bed gave a little, weak cry when she saw me, and held out her hand eagerly. The change in her, since I had seen her before, was shocking. She was terribly thin and white, and the two red spots in her cheeks gleamed like crimson paint. Her eyes, that seemed twice too large, burned feverishly in their hollows.

"You—came, monsieur?" she whispered. "I—I thought you would come. It was so—so good of you! St. Denis wrote me that

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"The protesting hands again appealed to heaven."

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—you would come when I should—send for you."

I dropped upon my knees beside the bed and caught the two wasted hands in mine.

"Ah, child, child!" I cried, "why didn't you send for me before? Why did you wait till—now? I'd have come so gladly, Colette, so gladly!"

She gave me a little, tired smile and turned her head wearily upon the pillow. "Grand merci, monsieur!" she whispered, "grand merci! But I didn't need anything—they've been good to me—Élise, and Marie Delmar, and all. But—I wanted to see—you to—ask you to say—say 'Good-bye' for me—to St. Denis——"

"Ah, no, no!" I cried. "Ah, no, Colette! It hasn't come to that! We're going to take care of you now—to take you away where you'll get better soon, where you'll get quite well—don't talk of 'Good-byes,' child!"

But she moved her head on the pillow, and a little fit of coughing came and shook all her frail body cruelly, shook her till she gasped for breath.

"It's—too late, monsieur!" she whispered after a time. "Listen—listen, monsieur! I have very little—strength left. Listen! Say to—St. Denis, dear St. Denis! as I cannot—say to him myself, that I'm—I'm glad it—turns out—this way. Say to him—that I've loved him always, always, from—the very first; that when I—ran away, when I played him false—it was for a silly, silly pique—a woman's pique because I—I knew that he had—never—loved me, that he'd only been sorry for me, kind to me, kinder than anyone else in all the world. Oh, say to him that I—loved him madly through it all. Tell him, monsieur, that what I—I did, a little while ago, for him, was reparation, to make up for—for wronging him; that I did it gladly—ah, so gladly! Tell him not to be—sorry, not to—regret. Tell him that when I—go—as I must soon go, it will be thinking of him, saying his name, holding his—locket to—my lips!" And she pulled from her bosom a little flat locket that was fastened about her neck by a thin gold chain.

Another fit of coughing shook her, and at its end she lay silent for a time, panting for breath, weak from the strain. The edge of a letter, dislodged by her movements, showed at the neck of her garment. I saw the writing, and it was Denis's hand.

"Tell me monsieur," she whispered ...tly. "He'll come back—back to Paris, won't he—St. Denis? He'll come back to—her? He'll make her leave the husband whom she—doesn't love? They'll be happy together after a time, won't they, monsieur? See, I'm glad, glad! I would have him happy—— Oh, but not too happy—— Yes, yes, I'd have him come back to her!"

"Hélas, Colette!" said I, "he'll never come back to her, nor to any of us who love him! We shan't see him again, child. You'll see him before we will—if one may believe the books. I will write him all you've said, dear girl, but I shan't see him again ici-bas."

She turned her head upon the pillow so that her great eyes burnt into mine, and there was a little, wondering, glad smile at her lips.

"He—means to—die down there?" she whispered, "to die, monsieur? He—won't come back to the other woman—the tall, proud one? Ah, if—I might meet him là-haut! Monsieur, monsieur, you've made me so glad to go, so glad! If I might meet him! Tell me, monsieur, do you believe—do you think——? Ah, but you don't know, do you? Personne ne sait pas—not even le bon père Michel! He means to—die down there, to die as—as I'm dying? Oh, I shall be waiting for him—moi, waiting à l'autre côté! How I loved him in those old days! Monsieur, do you know what love is? It's a rose—with thorns. Roses die, monsieur, in hands that are careless; and they're thrown away, withered; but—sometimes—they live for ever—if one shelters them and guards them, waters them with one's heart's blood, carries them in one's bosom. He never loved me, hélas! He only pitied me. I wonder if he'll—love me—là-haut? Listen, M'sieur! Once he taught me, my St. Denis, a little song, a love song, en Anglais. I—I do not know what it means, the words—but I—sang it to him with my guitar. Will you write to him that—that I sang it once again, before—I went? Such a pretty little—chanson—all of—of love!" And smiling softly as she lay, one cheek upon the pillow, her great mass of black hair loosened from its braid and streaming to the floor, she closed her eyes and sang just over her breath—

"Ole mozzaire 'Ubbaird
She went to ze cubbaird
To fetch 'er poor dog abbone!"

"Colette, Colette!" I cried in an agony, hiding my face in the bedclothes. It was the most heartbreaking thing I ever heard.

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But she raised one white hand to hush me and sang on, just over a whisper, smiling tenderly, as one smiles in sleep.

"—But w'en she got zaire,
Ze cubbaird waz bare,
An' so ze poor dog got—got—none!"

And a most terrible spasm of coughing came again to rack her, so terrible that I thought she would never have done.

The door opened behind me, and the young Frenchwoman came in quickly.

"Ah, monsieur!" she whispered, "you must go. You have stayed too long already!" She caught up a medicine-glass from a stand near the bed, and forced some of the liquid between the girl's lips, so that after a bit, as I stood hesitating by the door, she grew quieter and lay very still, gathering strength and breath.

"Just a moment more, Élise!" she whispered, "un petit instant!" And the young woman, with a warning glance towards me, went out again and closed the door behind her.

"I must go, Colette," said I. "You're far too tired to talk. I'll come again, often. I must go now."

But she shook her head. "Too—late—m'sieur!" she whispered. Then, after a moment: "Monsieur, would you—would you be willing—if St. Denis were here, he would do it—would you——?" She held up her white, frail arms a little, and there was an eager, wistful smile upon her lips. I knew what she would ask.

"Ah, child!" I cried, "dear child! try to think I'm St. Denis! Shut your eyes and pretend I'm St. Denis, for he'd do as I'm doing." And I bent over the bed, kneeling beside it, and slipped my arms under her, raising her so that I held her close to me. And I kissed her lips twice.

When I looked back from the door, she lay quite still, with the same tender smile upon her lips as when she had sung the "little chanson, all of love."

"I will come back to-morrow, early," I said, outside, to the young woman.

But that night they sent me word that she had gone à l'autre côté very suddenly and quite without pain—singing.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I CAME in from poor little Colette's funeral sad and tired; for I had walked, hat in hand, among the chief mourners, all the long way to the cemetery. At the lodge by the iron gate the concierge told me that M. le Colonel waited for me in the studio.

When I entered, I thought at first that he must have wearied of waiting and gone away. Then, after a moment, I saw him sitting by Denis's writing-table, over in the shadows, at the far side of the room. His head was in his arms upon the table, and he was quite still.

"Von Altdorf!" said I, "Von Altdorf!" but he did not stir. Then I went across the room and touched him upon the arm.

Colonel von Altdorf raised a face that I did not know.

"Why—why, man, what's happened?" I cried in alarm. "What are you looking that way for? What is it, I say?" Then my eye caught a crumpled bit of paper between his fists—a despatch.

"You've news?" I demanded, "bad news? from Novodnia? from the Prince?"

"There is no Novodnia," said Colonel von Altdorf in a dull, tired voice, "and there's no Prince, either."

I think I stared at him for quite a minute. Then I went over to the little cupboard in the wall and took out a flask.

"Here!" said I soothingly, "you drink a drop of this, and then we'll talk it over. You're a bit feverish. You don't know what you're saying."

But Von Altdorf pushed away the flask.

"Would you—like to see it?" he asked, still in the strange, dull tone, and offered me the crumpled telegram. It was a senseless jumble of words, and I threw it back to him impatiently.

"I can't read that, man!" said I. "Write it out, or else, for Heaven's sake, tell me what it says! If anything has happened, tell me! Wake up!"

Colonel von Altdorf settled back in his chair with a little sigh, and twisted the sheets of paper idly between his fingers. He seemed in a kind of stupor quite beyond any feeling.

"This," said he, with no emotion or seeming interest in his tone, "this tells of things that must have happened two days ago. It was sent, not from—from Novodni, but Belgrade, by one of — Czerowitz's men. Czerowitz is dead. The Prince is—dead——"

"Great Heavens!" I cried in a gasping whisper. "Dead? dead? the Prince?"

"Denis Mallory is dead," continued Von Altdorf, as if he had not noticed the interruption. "Georgias and his forces made an unexpected attack upon the capital after a

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night march. The garrison turned colour and joined them—even the Life Guards, all but a few. The Prince—the Prince was killed upon the steps of the Palace, surrounded by a dozen officers and faithful men, Denis Mallory among them. It is certain that the Prince is dead, and that Czerowitz and the Marshal are dead also. Denis Mallory fell across the body of the Prince, whom he had been shielding. A young lieutenant of the Guards escaped and fled to Belgrade, from whence he sent the message to me; but—but not before he had learned that Georgias' movement had been inspired and in part directed and provisioned by—the White Throne, and that Novodnia is to be—to be wiped off the map—included within the Bulgarian boundaries. There is no more Novodnia. It's a Bulgarian province. That—that is—all." And he sat silent once more, crumpling and smoothing the bit of paper between his hands, staring at the tapestried walls across the room.

I suppose it was quite half an hour before either of us spoke or moved. Then at last I rose, taking a long, deep breath, and moved once or twice up and down the room. I laid a hand upon Von Altdorf's shoulder and shook him gently till he raised his head.

"Come!" said I. "Come! we must tell his—we must tell the Princess."

"There is no Princess," muttered Von Altdorf.

"She must always be the Princess to us!" said I. "Come, man!" and he followed me quietly.

At the foot of the little ladder that had long since been set for our convenience at the studio window, we ran upon Sir Gavin MacKenzie. Von Altdorf stood by while I told him swiftly the terrible news which the despatch had brought. I had never seen the gruff old Scotsman so overcome.

Then, after a moment, slowly and with drooping heads, we went up through the garden paths to where a gleam of white and yellow showed the Princess in her long steamer-chair.

She must have seen us coming, for she rose when we were still at some distance, and stood waiting, and the book that she had held in her hands dropped unnoticed to the ground. I think she suspected, from our faces and our bearing, something of what we would tell, for her own face went a little pale, and her eyes grew wide and frightened.

So we came to where she waited, and stood before her bowed and silent, dreading to speak the first word.

But the Princess put out a hand and touched me, looking into my face with those wide, frightened eyes.

"Why—why, gentlemen?" she faltered. "What is it? What is it you would say? Colonel! Sir Gavin! Why, Mr. Creighton! Tell me, please! It's—bad news, of—of course—from—Novodnia? Tell me, please, quickly! See, I'm quite, quite calm! I can—bear anything. Don't try to break it to me gently. Tell me at once. He is—he is—dead?"

"Oh, madame!" said I, "the Novodnian hopes have been crushed utterly—beyond retrieving. There has been an attack upon—upon the Palace, and the Prince your husband—the Prince, your husband, is—dead."

"But *he?*" demanded the Princess Eleanor swiftly, her voice rising to a hoarse cry, "but *he?* What of *him?*" And then all at once she bethought herself and shrank back, catching her hands to her mouth.

"Madame," said I, "the bravest gentleman and faithfullest friend in all the world is said to have died also, fighting to the last for the Prince, your husband."

Then I went on, gently as I might, to tell her all we knew of the tragedy that had swept so suddenly across the high hopes and brave plans of the gentlemen who fought for Novodnia's independence; but I do not think the Princess heard any word of it all. She had sunk back into her chair again, and sat quite still, her hands covering her face.

Then after a long time, while we stood silent and awkward, not daring to speak to her, powerless to utter any word of poor comfort, she looked up once more. Her face was perfectly calm, unnaturally calm, with no trace of emotion—as Von Altdorf's had been.

"I thank you, gentlemen," said she, "for telling me—the truth, with no hesitation, no foolish attempts to make it light. I—can say nothing just now. I must—have time to think. Will you leave me for a little? Oh, Colonel von Altdorf, that Fate of which you preach has played her last card, hasn't she? I wonder—I wonder if she's laughing. Ah, go, please go!" And we left her there under the trees, the sweet, warm sunlight slanting through the leaves in golden splashes about her, the heavy perfume of flowers filling all the air, birds twittering cheerily from the branches overhead, and even—to complete the irony—a snatch of bright, gay music coming from a barrel-organ in the street beyond the high wall. I

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remember the music, it was an air from "Mignon."

We went down through the garden to the studio, and—Colonel von Altdorf having by this time come quite to himself again—we talked till the day was gone of the terrible thing which had all in a moment wrecked our every plan and hope, and had cut the very ground from under our feet.

The chief problem was, of course, what was to become of the Princess Eleanor—for we still thought of and spoke of her as "the Princess," though she had no right to the title. To have called her anything else must have seemed a sort of unwarrantable liberty—an impertinence. The most natural event seemed to be that she should go back to her people in America, for there was now nothing to keep her in Europe. The Prince was dead, his country was as if it had never existed as a body politic. She had no place here.

So, at least, it seemed to us, as we sat talking the matter over, and we agreed that after a little delay, when the horror and shock should have in some measure passed, we would put the thing to her judgment and advise her to return home.

Then, after a bit, we fell, most naturally, to talking of Denis Mallory, in hushed, gentle voices, as of a great man gone to his last rest; to reminding each other of all the things which had happened since that first evening at the Café d'Alençon, of his sayings and deeds, of what seemed to us the matchless nobility of the man, and of our bitter shame that we should so have misjudged, so have slighted him, at the first. We tried to picture that gallant fight on the steps of the Palace, where he had met his death. We tried to picture his bearing in the face of that certain disaster—the paltry dozen brave spirits grouped there on the steps, high over a snarling mob. Gallant it must have been. Ah! there was no doubt of that! Smiling, probably. That would have been like him—smiling derisively down into the sea of faces while he drew his blade for its last grand play. Close beside his Prince—aye, that's where he would have been, close beside or before him, covering his body with a marvellous swordsmanship that must have made those Southern dogs gape and stare.

And then—then, when Karl, poor gentleman, was at last down, when Czerowitz was down, and the old Marshal—for one felt that Denis would be the last—then one pictured him, smiling still over a dozen wounds, that proud head high and defiant—one pictured him falling as a king of old time, magnificently, with none of the misery of defeat, grand in his very ruin.

So we talked together and wove our fancies, and sang our valedictory to the man we loved, till the daylight faded to the dusk, and dusk gloomed to night. And at last old MacKenzie and Colonel von Altdorf rose sighing and went to their homes.

"He was the best that the good God makes," said old Sir Gavin gruffly. "We'll no see another such in the world."

"We all refused, once, to take his hand," said Von Altdorf. "We should pay well for that in the next world."

"I've paid well for it in this one," said I, and took to my bed the heaviest heart that can burden a man's breast.

CHAPTER XXV.

WAITING again, waiting for what we knew not, save that the habit of inaction seemed to have fastened upon us, leaving us idle while the days dragged interminably by. Perhaps it was the reaction from our time of stress and excitement, perhaps it was a sort of maze, a stupor following upon the sudden upsetting, in so tragic a manner, our carefully laid plans and confident expectations. I know that we all went about dully, taking little interest in what we did, and that the future seemed hung with a curtain which we dared not, or lacked the energy to, pull aside.

We spoke to the Princess Eleanor of our discussion relative to her prospective movements, and urged her return to America, where she might, among her old friends and associations, the sooner rid herself of the pall of tragedy and ill-fortune which had so weighed her down; but the Princess, like us all, seemed strangely apathetic and unwilling to bestir herself. She put us off with promises to think of the matter soon, to wait till she was fully rested, that she was not yet prepared to move.

Meanwhile I met her often, as before, in the garden, and we talked together of the past, and of the fuller news that came to Colonel von Altdorf day by day in despatches or letters, bearing upon the conditions in what had been Novodnia.

The late Prince, we learned, had been quietly interred among his fathers in the great cathedral at Novodni. This was done partly by orders from the White Throne,

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partly because the Novodnians, sobered after their debauch of rioting and bloodshed, desired that their late ruler should rest befittingly and in dignity.

Of Denis Mallory we learned nothing more. The disturbed conditions in the capital made any careful investigation impossible. Indeed, all our news came piecemeal from Belgrade, whither the few faithful souls left alive had fled for safety. It seemed that he must have been buried along with the other victims of that cowardly attack, in some unmarked grave which no one might, later, be able to point out. Ah, well, it was a soldier's grave, dignified by what rested within it. It was such as he would have chosen, I think. His monument lay in a few hearts and memories. I fancy we all envied him a little.

As for the puppet leader of the uprising, the tool of an ill-concealed hand, he was, so we learned, in Moscow—ostensibly in consultation with the force that had raised and directed him; actually a prisoner, held in safe view till all danger from him should be at an end, till Novodnia should be securely established as a nameless province of her greater sister State.

Of all these matters we talked at length, the Princess Eleanor and I, sitting or walking in the old garden; but still the Princess would speak no word of Denis Mallory, only listened with averted face when I talked of him, save that one day it was when we learned, through despatches to Colonel von Altdorf, that nothing more was known of him, that he must have been obscurely buried with the others; and I brought her this news, blurting it out badly, with no comment. She looked up at me for an instant, and her lips quivered.

"Now God rest his soul, Mr. Creighton!" said she. "God give him in the next world what he never found in this—peace and happiness!"

"I think he found a certain happiness, madame," said I sadly. "It was in serving you, making sacrifices for you, fighting for you. Peace of soul he might not find. Aye, God grant it to him where he is now! Still, I think he found happiness—all he dared hope for."

"God rest his soul!" said the Princess Eleanor again very low.

It was upon one of these days when we sat under the great trees where the Princess's chair was placed each morning for her—she would never sit upon the old stone bench, nor, if she could help it, pass near it—that we saw, coming down one of the paths from the house, Colonel von Altdorf and Miss Jessica Mannering. Miss Mannering appeared to be much absorbed in the splendours of a very handsome ring set with a sapphire between two diamonds. This ring encircled the third finger of her left hand, and Miss Mannering held the hand out before her at various angles, watching, with little murmurs of delight, the flashes evoked from the stones by the sunlight that filtered through the leaves high overhead. The murmurs of delight she occasionally varied by little snatches of song—of a sentimental character; —and honesty compels me to add that her right hand rested confidingly upon the manly shoulder of Colonel von Altdorf, whose smile-wreathed countenance presented that picture of utter imbecility commonly portrayed by middle-aged men in like circumstances.

They did not see us until they had come very near; then a smothered laugh from the Princess Eleanor brought them suddenly and cruelly to the bitter realities of life. Miss Jessica Mannering gave a little cry of dismay, and the hand that had rested upon Colonel von Altdorf's shoulder was withdrawn with some haste, while the other one, the one bearing the very handsome ring upon its third finger, sought a prompt retreat behind her back. As for Colonel von Altdorf, his expansive smile froze swiftly into a look of the most alarming horror.

But the Princess went up to her cousin and took her into her arms, laughing still, and kissed her a great many times, and cried—

"You silly little goose! did you suppose we hadn't known all about it for weeks? People in your state of mind always seem to think everyone else is blind and deaf—— Oh, Jess, Jess darling! you must be so happy! It's only insulting of me to hope you'll always be so!" And being women, with women's strange ways, they wept a little upon each other's shoulder—by way of exhibiting their pleasure—while I was pumping at Von Altdorf's arm and demanding how he had ever dared to do it.

But after the lovers had gone away, with their smiles and their glad eyes, down among the trees and shrubs, the Princess Eleanor sat for a long time with her hands over her face, and her lips quivered a little when she bade me adieu. Poor lady! her desolate plight must have come in upon her most sorely when she saw the happy love-light in other eyes.

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"'You—came, monsieur?' she whispered. 'I—I thought you would come.'"

As for me, back once more in the studio, I stood staring helplessly at the table where the afternoon mail lay spread, and rubbed my eyes and stared again, thinking I must be a little mad, and took a turn up and down the room frowning fiercely at the strange trick that my eyes were playing me. For this letter, in the grey, square envelope, with a Servian stamp, would seem to be addressed in a queer, sprawling, unlovely hand that I knew as I knew my own. Of course, said I nervously, it was only a trick that my eyes played me. The thing was manifestly impossible; yet I forced myself out of the fit of mingled fear and dread and something else. I called a semblance of steadiness to shaking hands and tore open the square, grey envelope. I took one look

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at the letter's heading, and then I dropped into a chair that stood by the table, and laid my head down upon my arms and fell to sobbing like a woman.

But this is what I read when, after a little, I had pulled myself together and was able to hold the written sheets before my eyes :—

"BELGRADE, *June 5th.*

"DEAR OLD LAD,—

"Did it make you jump to see my ugly scrawl again? Faith! it's uglier than ever just now, for I'm not very strong yet. But you'll not mind if my pen does prance all over the page, as it has a queer way of doing —all on its own responsibility. You'll have had me under the sod long since, won't you, lad—you and Von Altdorf and old MacKenzie? But you can't lose a bad penny. It always turns up. And so I've turned up, much the worse for wear, Ted, but on my feet again, thanks to some good people here who took me in when I was little else but fragments of a man held together by my clothes, and managed somehow to stitch the fragments together.

"You'll have heard all that I'd tell you of what happened a month since: how those cursed dogs did for the Prince—God rest his soul!—and how Novodnia is Novodnia no more—and well served, too, for breeding such swine!

"Ah! but there's one thing I can tell that may be news to you, Teddy, lad. Our old friend Von Steinbrücke turned up here—I would say there, in Novodnia—and took another hand in things. So you didn't finish him, after all, though, by my faith, you left him a remembrance! The man wore a great bandage about his neck to the moment he died—for he did die at the last; but that comes later—and they said your point must have cut his palate or the root of his tongue, for he couldn't talk, only make queer beast noises. Oh, yes, Steinbrücke paid up!

"But ah, Teddy, Teddy! when I fall to thinking of those curs of Novodnians and of what they did, I see scarlet. I've fought, as you know, in many queer corners of the earth, and I've seen my share of blood and cruelty. I've seen those Latin Americans mob a president whom they didn't fancy—but he generally deserved it. I've seen Chinese drag a foreigner out of his house and tear him to bits—but they thought they had reasons. He was an enemy. What I'd never seen before was a man's own friend desert him, go over to the enemy, shoot him, stone him, not because they'd anything against him, but because it was plain that the enemy must win, anyhow, and they wanted to be on the safe side. Sheer cowardice, Ted, but such contemptible cowardice!

"Aye, they outwitted us, George and his crowd, though they did it through the treachery of our own men. They made a forced march one night, and in the morning they were in Novodni. The garrison had surrendered with never a shot fired! They came swarming and hooting about the Palace, soldiers and civilians, men, women, and children, calling for the Prince, and oh, lad, lad! the Life Guards ran out of their barracks down by the Palace gate and joined them! The Life Guards! Why, Prince Karl knew personally every man in the regiment, helped them out of their little scrapes, gave them wedding presents, stood godfather for their brats. Ah! that was the bitterest part of it all! We knew the thing was all over then; but the Prince would go out on the steps of the Palace and try to speak, and we went with him, a dozen of us. You know what happened. The mob came up at us, a great wave of them, and we lasted only a few moments. The Prince wouldn't lift a hand. He had no weapon, but stood there, bareheaded, hands clasped before him, till a bullet from below finished him. Thank God, he died before they got their hands upon him, for we had been holding them off with our pistols and swords till they finally trampled us under. And here's where Von Steinbrücke comes in. He was at the very head of the mob as it came up the steps. Gad! he was fairly frothing at the mouth to get revenge for that bandaged neck of his. Someone else engaged him first, and I saw no more of him for a few seconds, for I was, as you may say, busy. But directly, he whirled about, just before me, with a sort of snarl, and made at the Prince. Oh, well, I won't dwell on it. I finished your work, Ted, and then somebody caught me a knock over the crown, and I dropped upon the Prince's body. He'd been done for while I spitted Von Steinbrücke.

"Well, they looted the Palace and finally went away—to burn some public buildings, I believe—leaving the little heap of us lying on the steps. It seems that some well-meaning but not over-brave souls picked us up, and finding one or two not quite done for, shipped us off to Belgrade along with several train-loads of refugees, the decenter sort, who wouldn't stay in the capital to see it burnt and looted.

"So here I am, old lad, whole again—

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though precious flimsy—a plank from the wreck, and feeling mighty little of a hero. For I'm the chap who would have set Her and her husband firm on their throne and then made an end of myself. But her husband's dead, and the throne no longer stands. So I've failed all around.

"Does Von Altdorf still talk of his Fate? What a hand she played, Teddy, boy! I've come into a fortune, lad—and there's a bit of irony for you! It seems that my old Uncle John, who hated me as he hated nothing else in all the world, the devil included, got rolled out in the hunting-field about the time that I was so nearly done for, and leaving no will, his property comes down to me as next-of-kin. The solicitors appear to have seen my name in the papers as being in this row down here, and so wrote to me at Novodni, the letter coming on to Belgrade. Ah, well! the saints give him peace!—meaning thereby a good horse, a pack of hounds, and plenty of celestial foxes, with right of way through the Elysian fields. But for one thing, lad, I'd settle down now on the old gentleman's money and quit this vagabond soldiering. But the one thing is the only thing, Teddy, so no quiet life for me. I've a certain duty left to perform, a trust. Then, when that's over with, off for more fighting! Better luck this time, maybe. There's good work forward in the Transvaal, and the Cape Mounted Police know me of old.—They've jolly good reason to.—They'll give me a billet right enough. But first for my trust. I must come on to Paris and give the Princess Eleanor the last news of her husband. I've certain little things to place in her hands—keepsakes, a lock of hair, a ring or two, a locket the Prince gave into my care when he knew that he must die, and begged me to give to her should I by any chance come through the affair alive.

"So I shall see you again, after all, dear lad. Ah, it will be good to have a grip at your hand once more! And at Von Altdorf's and Sir Gavin's! I shall be there not long after you get this—a day or two, maybe. Tell them I'm coming, and be looking out for me.

"Till then, lad,

"Faithfully,

"DENIS MALLORY."

I do not know how many times I read this, and read it over again, sitting there by his old writing-table in the studio. I know that my heart was pounding at something like twice its normal speed, that I wanted to sing and dance about the place, to rush out into the street and shout aloud to everyone that Denis wasn't dead at all, but alive—alive and almost well! that we were going to see him, hear his dear old voice again, watch his whimsical little smile, feel his good hand-grip! Oh, I had quite an exciting little time, all by myself, there in the studio.

Then suddenly I thought of something and made a dash for the window that gave upon the garden. I vaulted the bar, in scorn of such trifles as ladders, and ran up through the trees. Yes, she was still there. I saw the white gleam of her gown through the shrubbery.

Poor lady! she must have thought me mad—as, indeed, I very nearly was—for I burst upon her, breathless and, I doubt not, capering, and waved the crumpled sheets of the letter over my head.

"He's not dead, madame!" I cried. "He's not dead at all! Do you hear? He's alive! He is coming to Paris! They nearly did for him, but he lived through it. I tell you he's *alive!*"

The Princess did not cry out nor turn pale nor make any show of excitement; only her eyes, when after a moment she understood what I would say, went slowly very wide with a certain eager brightness, and she held out a hand that shook a little, for the letter.

But I, dropping the letter into her lap, rushed madly on up to the house, in hope of finding Sir Gavin there, or perhaps Von Altdorf or Miss Mannering; for I wanted everyone to know the wonderful news. I wanted to see their faces when they heard for the first time that the man we loved was still alive.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IT was two days later, and I sat in the studio, trying to write letters which should have been written months since; but my pen had a trick of hanging idle over the page till the ink dried upon it, or of trailing off in the middle of a word, into an ineligible scrawl, while my eyes stared, unseeing, beyond the table and the studio walls, and an errant fancy wandered over the map of Europe between Paris and far-off Belgrade.

Where would he be now? Had he left Belgrade? Was he sitting behind a *Neue Freie Presse* in the Orient Express, counting the hours to Paris? Why the devil didn't he telegraph, or something?

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So the letters made but poor progress, and at last I threw down my pen in disgust and fell to pacing the room like a tiger in its cage.

"I'll go over to the house," said I at last. "They may have heard something since I saw them this morning." I let myself out of the window and went up through the garden.

But, half-way to the house, a hurrying servant ran me down. M. Mallory had arrived. M. le Colonel said to come at once! And I gave a great shout of delight and broke into a run.

Near the house I met the Princess Eleanor, who was coming out. She was a bit flushed as to the cheeks, a bit bright as to the eyes.

"Will you——" she said—"will you tell Mr.—Mallory that when he wishes to—to deliver his messages to me, I shall be in the garden?"

"Why, yes!" I cried. "Yes, gladly. Ah! be kind to him, Princess; he's done much for your sake! Where shall I say that you will be? Where in the garden?"

"Say that I shall be at the old stone bench," said the Princess Eleanor, moving past me with her head turned away. And I ran on.

Under the porch of the refectory I paused an instant. The doors beyond were open to the sweet summer air, and through them there came the hum of conversation in many voices; but presently, over the chorus of questions, of little cries and exclamations, his good old laugh! strong and deep and cheery as ever. Heavens, how it made my heart jump!

He was standing in the centre of the music-room, Sir Gavin and Von Altdorf and Miss Jessica Mannering pressing close about him, and half-a-dozen servants hovering near.

The past month had left its marks upon him, for he was very pale and thin and hollow-eyed, and he bore across the left cheek-bone a long scar as from a sabre-cut.

He heard my step at the door and turned about.

"It's Teddy!" he cried, and came over to me swiftly and caught me about the shoulders, shaking me back and forth.

"Why, lad, lad!" said he, "dear old lad!" and seized upon my two hands, nearly crushing them in his grip. Upon my word, he had strength left in him, for all his white, thin cheeks!

"She's waiting for you in the garden, Denis," I whispered—"at the old stone bench." And then, directly, I was almost sorry I had spoken, for all the bright, cheery gladness left his face quite suddenly, and it took on that old look of pain and hopelessness that I had grown to know so well before he went away.

"Why, yes, lad," said he; "yes, I must go, mustn't I?"

He turned about to the others talking and laughing in a little group.

"I must bear my message to the Princess, if you'll all excuse me for a bit," he said. "I shall be back in half an hour." And he left the room with a slow, lingering step, as if he dreaded what was before him.

He went out under the old Gothic porch, out into the cool, green shade of the garden, where flecks of yellow sunshine wavered about his feet, as the leaves above stirred in the wind, where the early roses filled all the air with scent, and birds hopped along the margin of the gravel paths, hunting for worms.

He went down under the prim acacias, down the centre path towards the fountain; and at its left, where stood the old stone bench, he saw a glimmer of something white. Then in a moment he stood before her, head bent.

The Princess Eleanor gave a little, low cry when she saw his pallor and his thin face and the scar across one cheek-bone, and she put out a hand to him timidly. But Denis was bowing and did not see.

"Will you not sit down, sir?" she begged, and pulled her skirt aside to make room for him. "You are not yet strong enough to stand long."

"Why—no, madame," he began. "I—I am quite strong, I assure you—— Still—since you are so good—— Yes, I will sit down for a moment. I have something to give to you and something to tell you of—of the Prince's death."

"You—fought beside him, they tell me," said the Princess Eleanor, with lowered eyes.

"Aye, madame," said he. "I stood beside him, sheltering him as best might, till he died."

"He died nobly," murmured the Princess, with a little sigh.

"He died, madame," said Denis Mallory, "he died a hero and a martyr; for when he went out upon the Palace steps, he knew that he went to certain death. Yet he would go, in spite of us all who sought to save him. He went unarmed, and stood there, facing those dogs, with no word or gesture till the bullet came. But before he went, he spoke to me of—you, begged me to come to you if I should escape, to tell you that he died as

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you would have him die, and that his last thought was of you. When I begged him to live for your sake, to escape as he might have done, he only shook his head.

"'She'd despise me if I should do such a cowardly thing,' he said. 'She never loved me. Let me win her honour and respect by dying like a man.' And he gave me certain little things that he kept by him always, certain trinkets, keepsakes, begging me to give them into your own hands. I—I made a little packet of them. Here it is."

He reached his hand into an inner pocket and drew out a small box, wrapped with paper, which he gave to the Princess. Something else that had been in the pocket slipped out at the same time and fell to the ground. It seemed to be a little knot of ribbons, pink, but covered by an ugly brown stain.

The Princess Eleanor laid the packet, unopened, upon her lap; but her eyes followed the knot of ribbons, which Denis Mallory, flushing a bit, had quickly picked up from the ground and put away again in his pocket.

"Why, that—what is—what is that?" she cried in a very low tone.

"A mere trifle, madame," said he, not meeting her eyes, "of—no value—save to me."

"Will you let me see it, sir?" asked the Princess Eleanor humbly.

He hesitated a moment, flushing again; but the Princess held out her hand, and after a little he laid the knot of ribbons in it.

"A knot of pink ribbons?" said the Princess Eleanor. "Only a knot of pink ribbons? It is a poor thing to value, sir, yet you say that it is of value to you. Why, you have cared for your treasure but indifferently! See, it is all stained."

"They are honourable stains, madame," said Denis Mallory coldly. "I am not ashamed of them." But the Princess gave a sudden cry and dropped the knot of ribbons from her hand. Then she caught it up again as quickly and looked up at him wide-eyed.

"You—you mean," she faltered, "they're bloodstains? *Your* blood?"

"It can be of no interest to you, madame," said he. "I am sorry that the thing dropped from my pocket—— Will you give me my knot of ribbons?"

He took the bit of stained silk from her hands and rose to his feet, bowing.

"And now, madame," said he, "I have performed my last service, since I have fulfilled my trust. I will intrude upon you no longer. I beg your permission to go."

"Ah, no—no!" she cried, turning a little pale. "But no! you—you must not go, yet. There is much that I would ask you of—of the Prince! Must I beg you to remain?"

"Why, madame," said he, "I am altogether at your service. I shall be more than glad to tell you all I know of—the Prince's death. I—I feared I was—unwelcome when once my mission was fulfilled. What is it you would know?"

The Princess Eleanor leaned forward a little, so that her face was hidden. She seemed not quite at her ease, not quite certain as to her words.

"Tell me," said she, "of—of yourself, sir. You speak altogether of the Prince, poor gentleman, and of his death. You say no word of yourself. What are you going to do now that the war is over in Novodnia? Mr. Creighton tells me that you were used to writing for the Press. Will you go back to literary labour?"

"Why, as for that, madame," said Denis Mallory, "I wrote to keep body and soul together when there was no fighting to be done, but the death of an old uncle has put me beyond want. I go from here to South Africa, where there is war. I shall find occupation there."

"But your—friends," said the Princess—"Mr. Creighton and Colonel von Altdorf and all? Surely they have some claim upon you? Surely they will not let you leave them again so soon, now that you may live where you will and as you will?"

"My friends, madame," said he, "will never attempt to hold me here, for they know why I must go. I have a thing to do which, in Novodnia, I failed in doing—along with my other greater failure."

The Princess shivered a little, for she knew what the thing was.

"And there is nothing, then, which could alter your determination?" she asked presently—"nothing which would keep you in Paris?"

"But one thing, madame," said he; "and that one thing I may never hope for."

"Never?" she murmured, her head still bent away from him. "You used not always to be of so hopeless a mind, sir."

Now, Denis was holding himself too hard in hand, setting too fierce a curb upon speech and eye, to realise that the Princess Eleanor's manner towards him was far

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different from her attitude at their last meeting. If it occurred to him at all, he doubtless thought it a mere natural graciousness, such as a woman so queenly must use towards the meanest thing that approaches her. Still, I think that her softened voice, her lack of outward scorn and contempt, gave him a certain shred of courage.

He rose to his feet and moved over to the old fountain, where he stood some time with his back to the Princess, frowning down upon the bubbling water, clasping and unclasping his hands, and stirring the green mould with a thoughtful foot.

Then all at once he drew a long breath as of decision and turned again towards the Princess.

"Madame," said he, "I have something to ask of you, to beg of you before I leave Paris, never to return. It may be that you cannot or will not grant it, and if so—why, my asking will have been only one more presumption, one more impertinence. When we—when I saw you last, here in the garden, I told you that I should ask nothing of you, not forgiveness, not pity; but when, weeks ago, I lay between life and death, and did not know if I should see another day dawn, it came to me that I could die in peace if only I had your forgiveness for the great wrong I had done you; not your pity—that were beyond reason to ask; just your forgiveness.

"When I left Paris with the Prince, it was in my mind to serve you by serving him, and, so doing, to lose a life for which I had no love. But, as you know, madame, I failed; for I did you no service, alas! and I am still alive. It seems that there rests no further service that I can attempt for you; and since my love for life has grown not at all, I go to Africa to lose it there. Have you such kindness in your heart, Princess, that you can give me forgiveness for the bitter wrongs I did you? Can you set me at peace?"

The Princess Eleanor rose to her feet before him and looked into his eyes.

"Forgive you?" she cried in a little, low, shaking voice. "Oh! forgive you? It is I who should go upon my knees to ask your forgiveness, sir; for I think no man has ever served a woman so faithfully or at such cost, asking nothing at all in return. Forgive you? If I thought I could make you forget the terrible things I said to you, here in the garden, if I thought I could blot that whole dreadful scene utterly from your memory, I should be—why, I should be almost happy! Oh! I have said things to you that no man could ever forget. You must be the one to forgive, sir, if you can forgive."

He stared at her for a long time in a trembling silence, doubting his senses, refusing to believe that his ears heard aright.

"But—but, madame, the great wrong I did you!" he whispered finally, "the contemptible trick I played upon you! the deception, the lying!"

"You did it for my own sake," said the Princess Eleanor—"to save my life. You stooped to dishonour, if it were such, for me, as I was too mad to realise. Ah! I don't know whether it was right or wrong! probably I shall never know; but I'm certain that it was noble and self-sacrificing and faithful, as is everything you have done. If I could not feel it at the time, why, I think I was a little mad, a little crazed by the horror of it all. A woman who sees her life in fragments about her feet is not one to be kind and just. Ah! but I have had time in the last month to regret most bitterly all my ungratefulness and brutality and blind anger! I have had time to see things as they truly are, to realise that no woman was ever so faithfully or so unselfishly served in all the world.

"When I thought you were—you were dead, in my service, and after what I had said to you, I—I wonder that I didn't die myself! Oh, Denis, Denis Mallory, must I go on? Must I say it all? Will you give me no help?" She sank back again upon the old stone bench, covering her face with her hands, and her little ears burned crimson.

But Denis Mallory, on his knees before her, raised shaking hands to her own and drew them gently away. In his face there was a sort of pale wonder, a puzzled unbelief, but his eyes were wide and bright with the dawn of a certain great passion of joy.

"Yes," said the Princess Eleanor, looking bravely into his eyes. "Yes, I will tell the truth. I've—loved you all the time, every moment of the time! It was because I loved you so that I could be so bitter, so cruel to you." She paused, smiling—that smile that is close to tears—and fell to stroking his black hair, for he had laid his head upon her knees, face downwards, and his shoulders heaved.

"Oh!" she cried in a hushed voice that trembled as she spoke. "If you were not the Prince, nor I the Princess!"

His head came up in a flash, and his arms went round her as he knelt before the seat.

"I'm not the Prince," said Denis Mallory, with his lips against a very small ear.

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"His head came up in a flash, and his arms went round her."

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"Ah, no!" she cried, "not the Prince! only the King of all the world! Let me look into your Majesty's eyes to find the love there, and your Majesty's smile to see how bright the sun shines! Have you lost your tongue, Denis, my Denis Mallory?" demanded the Princess, "for this will never be you without a tongue! Can you not speak?"

"Words beggar love, my sweet," said he. "I'm tongue-tied, stunned with too much joy, made a little mad with a happiness that I had not dreamed of coming to me. Is it really I, my queen, holding your sweet hands here in Paradise? Is it really you who lay your cheek against my lips and look at me with love? Why, no, no! it can't be! It's one of those cursed fever dreams, and I'll wake soon with a most damnable pain in the shoulder and head, and be fed something from a bowl. Why, no! I'm one Denis Mallory, soldier of fortune, sometime tavern-brawler and drunkard! This will never be real. It's a fever dream! I've had 'em before."

But the Princess Eleanor pulled him down upon the old stone bench beside her, laughing softly, and laid her head where—where there seemed a place made especially for it.

The sweet summer air stirred the leaves over their heads and quivered the splashes of sunshine that lay upon the green mould beneath. It brought up to them the scent of early roses and mignonette from the flower-beds under the studio window. The old cracked fountain gurgled and laughed with its tiny stream; and from over the high street-wall came the tooting of a tram faint and far away.

"That Fate," said the Princess, stirring her head comfortably where—where it seemed to belong, "that Fate of which Colonel von Altdorf was wont to preach—I said the other day when—when I thought you were dead, heart's heart, that she'd played her last card, laughed her last laugh. I wronged her, didn't I? She was holding the last one."

"Two," said Denis Mallory. "The King and Queen."

THE LAST WORD.

THEY were married within a fortnight.

"It may seem heartless and disrespectful to Karl, poor gentleman," said the Princess Eleanor, "but I was never his wife in more than name. To mourn for him, to go in black, to pretend sorrow, would be but an insult to his memory. Let us take our happiness while we may. Heaven knows we have had little of such!"

So they were married. It was a double wedding, for Colonel von Altdorf succeeded in persuading Miss Mannering that there was nothing unseemly in a little haste. Then they went away, Von Altdorf and his bride to the Tyrol, where he has a place, I believe; but Denis and the Princess Eleanor quite to the other side of the world, to the heart of that strange, brooding East, where one may be together at rest and peace, may forget the hurry and bustle, the strain and stress, of this Western world of ours, may forget old pain and sorrows, heal ancient wounds, and put away bitter enemies.

They have a great estate upon a certain island not unknown to travellers, where sweet airs blow always through gardens of strange, bright flowers, through groves of spice trees; where, standing upon a little hill, one may see the ocean with white sails and an occasional trail of smoke along the sky. And here they live, happy in each other's great love as few lovers may be happy. Here they are building their lives anew over the ashes of old sufferings; and for the world beyond they have never a sigh, never a wistful glance.

Still, I think they will some day return to us, in their own good time, when they are quite ready. I cannot think that they mean to bury themselves for a lifetime. Denis is too strong and keen, too natural a leader of men, to sit long idle; and she is too noble and beautiful a soul, too splendid a woman to hide herself for ever from the world where she might take so high a place.

So I wait, hearing from them at intervals, hoping always that they may emerge from their island Paradise, to see their faces again, hold their hands, feast my eyes once more upon the loveliest woman I have ever seen, and feel the grip, hear the cheery voice, of the bravest and truest gentleman in all God's great world.

THE END.

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THE MAY MOON.
By Harold Percival.

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A CEMETERY FOR PET ANIMALS.

By CHARLES E. BRANCH.

Photographs by Clarke and Hyde.

WIDE as the world is, great as is its population of dogs and cats, there are few cemeteries for domestic pets, even in those countries where such creatures are neither a national dish nor even an occasional one. London has a little-known graveyard for man's most faithful friend and the solitary spinsters' dear

THE MOST ELABORATE GRAVE AND MONUMENT IN THE CEMETERY.

companion, in a corner of Hyde Park; these bitterest enemies in life are in death deposited in peace in the Lacken Park at Brussels; and New York is, I believe, not without its cemetery for the deceased domestic pets of millionaires. But it is Paris that boasts the most elegant zoological necropolis of all. There may be other special *terrains*, apart from those mentioned, devoted to this particular purpose, but it is doubtful; if there are, and they can truthfully lay claims to greater magnitude or magnificence than that of the French capital, then they certainly are worth travelling far to behold. Assuredly the animal cemeteries of London and Brussels cannot be compared to it, and I doubt if that of New York could be, since, were such the case, it would, ere this, have been well advertised.

La Nécropole Zoologique of Paris, as this cemetery for pet animals is officially called, is situated on an island in the Seine, at Asnières, not a great distance outside the city; and a more ideal spot for the purpose than the Île des Chiens, as it has been christened, it would be difficult to find. It rises abruptly from the river, its sides fringed by lofty trees which, if their skeletons appear somewhat bleak in the leafless months, cast, when clothed in the fulness of their verdure, over greensward and blossomed flowers a genial shade that gives the spot an air of

LOOKING ALONG ONE OF THE WALKS.

repose and tranquillity like unto that of some deep-buried country churchyard. Within this vale of shade and peace rise graves and monuments to I know not what number of domestic animals and feathered pets, which, in their lifetime, were to their owners something more than mere dogs and cats and birds. Most of the graves are tended with

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ANOTHER TRIBUTE TO A DOG.

a care that reflects no small discredit upon human memory for humanity, when compared with the neglected, forgotten graves of men. Many of the monuments above them are elaborate and costly; it is in all verity the "*Père-la-Chaise des Animaux.*"

Undoubtedly there are some persons in whose eyes the cemetery does not and will not find favour. I have heard it criticised as "a waste of money," "a sacrilege," "an insult to mankind." *Per contra*, I will state the reasons of the man who was responsible for the founding of the cemetery, and the views of those eminent persons who were in line with him on the project. The founder was M. Georges Harmois, a French *littérateur*, philanthropist, and *ami des animaux;* those who supported him included the late Émile Zola and Mme. Durand, the proprietress of *La Fronde*, the woman's newspaper. There could be mentioned also the names of a score of philanthropists, literary lights, politicians, and lovers of animals, whose personalities are well known in France, where their opinions carry weight. M. Harmois based his reasons for the necessity of such a cemetery on hygiene and sentiment. Zola and Mme. Durand upheld his view; and the municipality of Paris concurred with him on the former grounds, if not on the latter.

The ultimate fate of dogs and cats is no mystery. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it is the river or the gutter; the one exception is buried in the back garden. France passed a law half a century ago making it a punishable offence to dispose of dead domestic pets by other means than burial; and Paris pays to-day the yearly sum of £160 for the recovery of the uninterred dead from the waters of the Seine, and from that general dumping-ground for rubbish, the fortifications. It would have been cheaper to have provided a cemetery where all and sundry could have buried their deceased pets, or, cheaper still, a municipal crema-

VIEW OF THE CAT AND BIRD SECTION OF THE CEMETERY.

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torium. The danger to the public health of the promiscuous disposal of dead animals is only too apparent. That was one of the reasons that urged M. Harmois to found this cemetery. The other reason was that even a dog should be given its due, and many deserved a better end than river or gutter —many that had been faithful companions, in some cases sole friends of their owners during life, others that had merited more than ordinary consideration by some noble act such as the saving of life. That was the sentimental side of the question; and that hundreds were of this way of thinking, that M. Harmois had touched a chord of deeper sentiment than he perhaps expected, it is but necessary to visit Asnières to discover.

A VERY ELABORATE TOMBSTONE.

It was only a little over three years ago that the *Société Française Anonyme du Cimetière pour Chiens et autres Animaux Domestiques*, to give it its full title, was founded with a capital of 350,000 francs divided into 100-franc shares, of which 2,500 were offered amongst the friends o the project and by them taken up. The Île des Ravageurs was purchased for the purpose of making the cemetery, and renamed the Île des Chiens. On what was a barren islet a beautiful garden and park have been laid out, and there, in three years, some hundreds of dogs, cats, and birds have been buried, the memory of many being perpetuated by the erection of stones and monuments from the most insignificant to the most imposing in appearance.

Nothing about the cemetery has been done by halves. It has a noble entrance facing on to the Pont d'Asnières. A source revenue to the Company is the fivepence for entrance. You purchase your tickets from the *concierge* in the little lodge on the right inside the wrought-iron gates, and passing the great monument erected to the famous St. Bernard, Barry— of which more anon — proceed along a fine, broad terrace to the cemetery proper, some forty yards square. Coming upon the scene unexpectedly, one cannot be otherwise than astonished, for many of the graves are marked by large, sculptured monuments, and decorated with evergreen plants and a variety of flowers, and beneath, you remember, are buried — only dogs. Only dogs! But when you inspect the carved stones closely, reading the inscriptions cut thereon, you comprehend that the animals were, in the estimation of their owners, far more than mere canines.

There are spaces devoted also to cats and birds, each decorated with mementos of departed pets, but it is the *quartier des chiens* that is most conspicuous, by reason of its well-kept grass, innumerable tombstones, and affectionate epitaphs. The monuments are of varied designs and all sizes. Many take the form of dog-kennels cut in stone, from two to three feet in height; others are more ambitious in design, from four to five feet in height and proportionately large. Around each are low fences in wrought metal, sometimes silvered, sometimes bronzed, and the majority of the plots are decked with flowers —pansies, daisies, violets, forget-me-nots. In several instances, too, that beholders may gain some idea of the departed dog, its portrait is introduced behind a covering of glass.

As a whole, the most striking and picturesque grave in the cemetery is that of "Diane." From a background of tall evergreen plants, a monument in white stone, some five feet in height, stands out conspicuously. Its appearance will be gathered

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from our photograph. It bears the inscription "*Diane*, 18 *Novembre* 1901. *T'u nous as charmés pendant ta vie, si courte. Ton souvenir sera toujours avec nous.*" The words are cut in a stone bow surmounting the monument, whose base is lost in a bed of multicoloured pansies. On the monument stand two bouquets of forget-me-nots made in beadwork. Forming a half-circle before the monument and enclosing the flowers are six granite pillars, connected with drooping silvered chains at their tops. The *tout ensemble*, and it enjoys the most prominent position, must have cost some hundreds of francs—not a penny less than thirty pounds, if not more.

WHERE BIRD PETS ARE BURIED.

Exceptionally uncommon and beautiful is the monument erected by its mistress to "Emma"—"My dear Emma," as she fondly calls it. The design is the capital of a large column, beautifully carved, over which rises a canopy in stone, so finely sculptured that the drooping folds of the raised curtain are perfect in their lines. This is surmounted by a crown; and beneath the canopy, reposing on a cushion, is the statue of the dog. On the tablet one reads that it was erected "to the memory of my dear Emma, faithful companion and only friend of my wandering and desolate life," and further that "She saved my life in May, 1891." I must leave it to the photograph to convey to readers a general idea of this beautiful example of the sculptor's art, adding, however, that it was erected by the Princesse de Cerchiari Pagnatelli, as a mark of esteem and affection for her companion of eleven years.

A QUEER ORNAMENT IN THE CAT SECTION.

Particularly noteworthy, too, is the monument erected to "Bob," of which our illustration will convey a better idea than any length of description. This also is in white stone, and stands six feet in height, being decorated with red and white daisies. It bears two inscriptions, the first of which reads: "*Hommage à ton pauvre petit cœur fidèle, si amant, dont les battements ont cessé à la douleur de notre séparation.*" The second is as follows: "*Ta vie ne fut que souffrances. La mienne en fut parsemée: Nous les confondîmes espérant les adoucir; mais la cruauté des hommes sut mettre un terme à ce bonheur passager.*"

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AN ELABORATE TOMBSTONE ERECTED IN MEMORY OF "EMMA" BY HER MISTRESS THE PRINCESSE DE CERCHIARI PAGNATELLI.

Beside this is a smaller monument to "Jappy," overrun with ivy, and "Jappy" is figured in stone, while the sentiments of its owner are tersely put in one stinging sentence that should make man writhe in his egotism: "*Plus je vois les hommes, plus j'aime mon chien.*" On another well-kept grave, in which repose the remains of "*Notre bon et fidèle Tosca,*" there is laid, enclosed in a glass case, the heavy silver collar that was worn by the animal, together with its photograph, and a painting of the dog on glass is affixed at the head of the grave, erected on a design in imitation of wrought iron. This grave is one of a set of three on which the flat stones are of finely polished granite. "Narcissa" lies beneath one of the stones; the other is ready to have the name of her companion cut upon it, when that companion dies.

Few monuments have been erected to cats, and fewer still to birds, and the graves of both the felines and feathered pets have rather a desolate appearance. But photographs of pussy are plentiful, and on one or two of the graves cat-statues have been deposited. But they are not intended to represent the counterparts of the living animals either in design or colouring, else we should never behold a yellow-glazed cat, covered with a design of red and blue flowers. In several instances cages are to be seen on the graves of pet canaries, but no attempt has been made to keep the graves in order or decorate them with flowers. All the love has been lavished on the dog.

The monument to "Barry"—the dog itself is not buried there—is a fine piece of sculpturing, which stands thirty feet in height. It depicts this great St. Bernard at the foot of the mountains, the famous *hospice* being outlined on the heights, and he bears on his back a child, its arms clasped tightly around his neck. The history of the dog is inseparable from that of the *hospice*, and the noble deeds of his life would fill a volume, for he saved no less than forty persons from death in the freezing snows of Grand St. Bernard, and lost his life when

A GRAVE DECORATED WITH A PAINTING OF THE DEAD DOG, WHOSE SILVER COLLAR REPOSES UNDER A GLASS SHADE, ON A VELVET CUSHION.

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going to the aid of the forty-first, being mistaken by the man in the waning light of the dying day for a beast bent upon attack.

It need not cost a large amount to bury an animal or bird in this *cimetière zoologique*, the expenditure being entirely dependent upon the whim of the owner and the length of his or her purse. A mere burial, for instance, costs but five francs, and most dogs here interred are "merely buried" in common graves containing three or four, separated by a layer of earth. Such animals must be carried to the cemetery by their owners. But, on the other hand, as much as £40 may be paid, which will give the holder a perpetual right to the bit of land and a prominent position on the ground. To secure a grave for ten years costs fifty francs, for twenty years seventy-five francs, for thirty years one hundred francs. If it is to be retained for half a century, one hundred and fifty francs must be paid, while for over that period two hundred francs is the charge; and a fairly prominent position will cost an additional five hundred francs.

The Company undertakes to provide coffins where desired, and many of the dogs are buried in lined coffins; takes photographs of the dead animals, disinfects the scene of their death, and transports the corpse from the owner's residence to the cemetery, having for this latter purpose a special carrier-tricycle, ridden by a uniformed officer. These attentions call, of course, for a further outlay. Then there is on the grounds a mortuary, or *depôt provisoire*, in which the dead can be deposited, pending the digging of the grave and the making of the coffin.

ERECTED IN MEMORY OF "BARRY," A ST. BERNARD DOG WHICH SAVED FORTY LIVES, AND WAS KILLED IN THE MOUNTAINS BY A TRAVELLER WHO MISTOOK IT FOR A WILD ANIMAL.

THE DOG MORTUARY.

In drawing up the rules to govern the interment of animals, the Company took every precaution that there should be nothing to which mankind might object as lacking in respect to humanity. So it was laid down that no ceremony could be conducted at a burial. Every coffin or case must be opened and the contents verified immediately it enters the cemetery.

So there is nothing to which any objection can be raised in connection with the interments or the decoration of the graves, and the cemetery fills a want that was both hygienic and sentimental.

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NANCY'S REASON.

By EDWARD H. COOPER.*

"THIS house," Monica told me impressively, "is stuffed with ghosts; they walk about all over the old wing in crowds."

"That's where your bedroom is," added Sylvia pointedly.

"Oh, please don't let them begin talking about the ghosts again!" cried May. "I know they'll do it all the evening now. Can't I not go to bed to-night? For pity's sake, can't I sleep with you, Monica?"

"You may sleep with me," said Monica, who was evidently laying herself out for a ghostly debauch, "if you promise to lie as quiet as a mouse when you wake up to-morrow morning, and not wake me up, too."

"If I was a mouse, you wouldn't lie quiet very long," said the practical May; and then we blew out the schoolroom lamp and conjured up the ghosts of the old Northumbrian castle till I felt inclined to protest on May's behalf. But the babe had been sung to sleep with these legends in her cradle, and knew them all by heart, and her preliminary terror was only an artistic touch of colour lent to the opening scene. To find a man who had never heard their stories before, and was possibly susceptible to alarm, and must subsequently sleep in the midst of their ghostly heroes and heroines, was just nuts to these three small ladies.

I did my duty, I hope, in the matter of shudders and thrills and notes of exclamation; but, speaking *en connoisseur*, the ghosts, with one or two exceptions, were a trifle too noisy to be impressive. The children's favourite was a gentleman of the early eighteenth century, whose custom it was in life to go out before breakfast and slay seven or eight Scots, and to come home saying: "Fie on this quiet life! I want work!" He now walked the castle, it appeared, brandishing his sword, muttering, and—a practice which somewhat restricted the hostess in making up her house-parties—slashing at any Scots folk who passed him by. We talked a good deal about this gentleman, who was certainly the noisiest ghost I ever met in fact or fiction. In contemptible contrast (in the story-tellers' minds) to this spirited gentleman were various quiet persons who walked about and looked at you appealingly, as if asking for some help. There was a woman who was reported to have hidden the family jewels in the '45 rebellion, and to have died before she could reveal their hiding-place; a child called Nancy, who had been ill-treated by her mother; and an old man who had betrayed the hiding-place of two priests to a Protestant mob of Charles I.'s day. They struck me, especially Nancy, as capable of producing a thrill or two under more dramatic treatment; but we passed them over rather lightly, in order to return to the sword-brandishing Border warrior. The conclusion of the *séance* came prematurely, the romantic atmosphere being rudely dissipated by the concluding incident. A stern-looking North-country woman appeared in the schoolroom at seven o'clock, requesting "Miss Sylvia" to "come to bed at once." I saw that something was wrong, and looked aside discreetly, while Sylvia protested that it was only seven o'clock.

"Have you forgotten," asked the newcomer sternly, "that you are to come to bed to-night and to-morrow night at seven?"

"Oh," sighed Sylvia, "no; but I hoped you had."

A cold command to make haste was the only reply; followed by an undignified scene of kicking and screaming; and concluding with the exit of Miss Sylvia in the arms of her nurse, a whirling tornado of brown curls and white lace garments. I do not know whether May detected in my face any other feeling than seemly grief and reprobation, but she assured me in tones of jealous pride: "I'm *often* naughty like that."

I went to bed early, and slept soundly and undisturbed; coming down, therefore, in the morning with a feeling that I should be met with disapproval and almost with contempt

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in the schoolroom. Such, in fact, proved to be the case, and I heard no more that day about the ghosts, their patrons evidently thinking me an unprofitable auditor, if, at

"The exit of Miss Sylvia, a whirling tornado of brown curls and white lace garments."

at the end of such an evening's preparation, I could do no better than pass the night in mere sleep.

But the following night, when I went to my room, there was work to be done; and as no occupation is too trivial when its object is the postponement of work, I walked round the panelled walls, lifting the mouldy, colourless tapestry which covered them in places, fingering some empty cabinets, and generally exploring. The exploration yielded no result, except a great deal of dust and a slight, pleasing suspicion that one of the panels could be opened if there were time to investigate it. I pulled a table in front of the fire, put two candles on it, and sat down to write a fairy story.

The clock struck one, and two; the fire was going out, and it was too much trouble to put coal on, though a north-east wind was rattling the windows and creeping in through many a crack and cranny. The supreme silence which reigned over the house, except when the sea-wind shook walls and windows, brought back one or two of the children's ghost stories, and the moment of their return was rather a nervous one. Yet this work must be finished to-night, and I went on with it, refusing with an effort even to look round at my bed, the thoughts of which were so enticing. I would write steadily on; I would not look round . . . would not look round at what? There was no thought of bed in my mind when I repeated the words to myself. I did not want to look round, and could not work. That, however, was a state of mind which for business reasons could not be allowed to continue. I turned and looked.

A child was standing at the foot of the bed—a little maid of about eleven, in a long, dark frock with short sleeves and a wide flounce of old English lace round it. Her face was white and not pretty, her hair hung down in long, straight lines; and her hands, folded in front of her, were white and thin, with the veins showing blue in them. She was standing there quite quietly looking at me, and did not move when I got up.

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The apparition was not a very frightening one, and my chief thought about it at the moment was that it would please the children to-morrow. They would have preferred the sword-brandishing person, but this was better than nothing. Who was it?

"Are you Nancy?" I asked.

The child-figure answered no word; only its sad, grey eyes looked at me with a shade more of life in them. I glanced away for a moment, presuming that this apparition was merely the result of late hours and Monica's stories, and willing to give every chance to science. In truth, when I looked back, the figure had left the bottom of the bed; but it was only moving towards the far wall. To my great satisfaction, it went to the panel which I had suspected of a capacity for opening, and stood there a moment. All the lore gathered from seers and ghost-books forsook me in this emergency, and I quite forgot that I ought to have followed. The small maiden looked at me for a moment sorrowfully and reproachfully; then she vanished.

A feeling that the schoolroom would hardly say "Thank you" for such a story, coupled with another, vaguer idea that my little visitor might be unhappy if she were the subject of chatter and laughter among this houseful of people, held me silent next day about her. Perhaps as a reward for this, she came back next night, and stood for a moment at the bottom of the bed, and then moved towards the wall, with appeal in her eyes. My manners came back to me, and I followed her to the panel; and when she vanished through it, I made various clumsy attempts to open it. But no sign of an opening could be found, and at this hour of the night decent regard for one's fellow-creatures forbade an attempt to kick it down. I went to bed in a temper, resolving that the panel should be opened to-morrow, even if it had to stay open all night and admit the whole army of Monica's ghosts, from the anti-Scot demonstrator downwards.

Next day, however, the question was settled in the simplest way. I asked Monica for more details about Nancy, whose history she had slurred over so slightingly on the evening of my arrival; and Monica, weary of such a long silence about her favourite ghosts, and thankful for anyone who would take an intelligent interest even in the least exciting of them, told me the child's story. She and her brother had been objects of bitter hatred to a stepmother whose own children they would prevent from inheriting a title and large estate. She had resolved to get rid of them, and had apparently succeeded. The boy had fought on the English side in the '45 rebellion and been killed; and the sister, a sickly, scared child, had died of ill-treatment. There was an old letter among the family papers describing how the writer had found Nancy living alone, day and night, in two rooms in a deserted, tumbledown part of the house, ill with cold and starvation, seeing and speaking to nobody except the evil woman whose visits to her were always followed by outcries and sobs which the servants talked about in frightened voices. When she was between eleven and twelve, Nancy died. One of the two rooms described in the letter was apparently the room in which I was sleeping, the other being connected with it by a sliding door and short passage, which Monica proposed to show me. The panel opened readily enough under the accustomed fingers of my guide, and we passed on into the next room.

It was a smaller room than the other, unused and completely neglected. Two chairs stood against one wall, their covering moth-eaten and stained. The window was cobwebbed over, so that the dull light of the winter afternoon could hardly struggle through its dark panes, while the mouldy curtains hanging over it tore into holes at a touch. The floor was bare, and in the middle of it stood a round, empty table, thick with dust. There were some curious three-cornered drawers in the table, which swung open sideways, instead of allowing themselves to be pulled out; and we looked into them hurriedly, hastening to see what was to be seen while the fast-dying daylight lasted. In the first two drawers were only scraps of paper; in the third was more paper and a small, square picture-book, with old-fashioned coloured prints of prim-looking children playing various games. Some of the pictures were crinkled, as if they had been wetted, and I passed my fingers gently over the pages, thankful to think that the little reader's tears had been long since dried. The next and last drawer was locked, and as I moved it about, wondering how readily the lock would yield, I felt Monica's hands suddenly clasped on my arm with a clutch of terror. Her face was gone ashen white, and her frightened eyes were staring into a corner of the room. Following their look, I saw Nancy there. She was standing very quietly with her hands folded in front of her, but there was a new look of contentment on her face, as if she were thankful that we had found our way at last to this lonely prison-room. Peering

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"She was standing very quietly with her hands folded in front of her."

forward, I saw for a moment the quaintly dressed little lady, and the grey eyes with this new light of pleasure in them. Then the figure vanished. I turned to console my weeping, trembling companion, who was protesting that she didn't mind seeing a gh but this one had "come in so quiet Unfastening the locked drawer seemed best chance of making her forget her fe There must be something in it, we agre

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or perhaps something which Nancy wanted. With one or two vigorous pulls we wrenched the drawer open. It drew out lengthways like an ordinary specimen of its kind; but two very blank faces stared into it when open, for it was empty. Then, with a simultaneous flash of intelligence—Monica and I are the same age, really, though I have lived in the world a few more years than she has—I and my companion began to feel about for the spring which should open one of those secret drawers familiar to so many generations of youth. We found it at last—it was but an ill-fitting false back to the drawer, an amateurish-looking affair—and with vague awe we picked up a small wooden doll which was lying there. Its face was wooden, the features and hair being merely painted on, and the arms and legs were unbending and roughly shaped, resembling in no way the graceful and agile limbs of its modern descendants. It was dressed in clothes which, although made of coarse material, were evidently, even to the male eye, possessed of some striking feature of superiority over ordinary dolls' clothes. It was Monica who pointed out to me at last that every garment was covered with the most elaborate needlework, which must, she explained, have taken months and months to do; and my little companion fell into a silence, turning over and studying each garment with sympathising, admiring eyes, and holding it up for me to see. The last ray of daylight was dying away as she and I stretched out our hands thus across the centuries to touch the little fingers which had worked at this lonely task; and then I brought my thoughts back to the table and drawer, and to a piece of paper which was lying in the latter, half-covered with round, faded child-writing. Monica and I took it to the window, and having sacrificed a handkerchief to the removal of a few cobwebs, we read the sheet, which was something in the nature of a last will and testament.

"Betty has told me to-night that I am very ill and perhaps I shall die. If I die, I want my doll to be buried with me. She is the only person I love in the world, and the only person who loves me.—NANCY."

The instantaneous action proposed by Monica was not possible, for certain reasons of politeness; but the permission of various authorities having been obtained next day, the doll was buried as near as possible to the little maid, who had come to us in this regulation ghostly fashion to plead that her last wish might be carried out.

JUST ONCE AGAIN!

JUST once again to walk with you in Spring
Across the hills where the pale violets swing!
Just once again!

Just once again to look into your eyes
Exceeding tender and exceeding wise;
Just once again!

Just once again to clasp you by the hand,
To feel that you forgive and understand!
Just once again!

Just once again to see your loving smile!
Then I would wait in patience for a while
Just once again!

Just once again! the words I dare not say
To you—who rest in Paradise to-day:
Just once again!

L. G. MOBERLY.

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THE CLIMBERS.

UP to the top of the upmost Alp,
Over the white-browed steep crevasses,
Up, it is up to the roof of the world,
Towering over the frowning passes,
Where the life of a man is the skill of his guide,
For the crags are sheer where the cliffs divide.

The Queen would go in the pride of her youth,
Unheeding the wary World's advising
She robed herself in the garb you wear
For mountain-climbing, immortalising
Furs that never had left their drawer
For grander scene than some social war.

The dauntless follower flanked our rear,
Or stumbled over an icy hummock,
Daring the deep death down below—
And save for the rope on his hapless stomach
His body had one day sure been found
In the glittering ice-floes underground.

The Queen laughed out in the pride of her youth
And the plastered peaks rang back her laughter,
And at last we won to the roof of the world
And laid our hands on its mighty rafter.
But in mixed emotion the Queen turned pale,
For she'd ruined her furs on a rusty nail!

ALDEN CHARLES NOBLE.

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"BRUSHER MILLS" CATCHING AN ADDER BY THE TAIL.

THE SNAKES OF THE NEW FOREST:

A CHAT WITH THEIR WORST ENEMY.

By S. L. Bensusan.

Photographs by Mrs. Delves Broughton.

I WAS staying at Brockenhurst, in the New Forest, in the early summer-time, when the meadows were aflame with flowers, and the forest itself shone in all the variegated tints of green that herald the pageants of June. Roses flowered in the gardens, and beans on the arable lands were their rivals in perfume, while by the edges of the wood, nettles, and bryony, pimpernel, buckthorn, bugloss, dog-rose, and spurge, had flowered to greet the summer. Cuckoos and nightingales were in full song in the woods, larks sought the upper air and filled it with melody; and on the village green, for an hour or two before sunset, cricket was in full swing. The merry cries of the children had a beauty that yielded to no other summer sound; and from the porch of the little house where I had taken up my residence for a few days, I realised to the fullest extent the exquisite charm of the English summer. "A perpetual grace to God for the beauty of common things." The expression of Zangwill a few nights earlier, in an after-dinner speech, came back to me and seemed to apply to everything that had life.

An old man came across the village green. He carried two tins in one hand, and a long stick and a green bough from a birch tree in the other, a straw basket was slung over his left shoulder, and a waterproof coat over the other one. As he came nearer, other peculiarities of his appearance were apparent. He wore a shovel hat pressed down over his ears, and high boots, fit to defy the rain. His grey-white beard rested on two waistcoats that were in turn surmounted by two coats; a long pair of scissors, bent at the tip, took the place of a watch and hung at the end of a chain midmost the outer waistcoat. His hair, peeping out from beneath the shovel hat, was much darker than his beard, and the bright, keen eyes of the man seemed younger than the face they lightened. There was something familiar about the old fellow's aspect. I thought for a moment, and then his name and work came back to my mind. He must be Brusher Mills, the famous snake-

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catcher of the New Forest. No tramp would have the steady walk, the upright bearing, or the steady look of the old man, or carry the cleft stick so well suited for stopping a snake, the forcep-like scissors for picking it up, the tin to receive it. He passed me a civil greeting, and I signed to him to come to the porch.

"Are you Brusher Mills?" I said.

"That's my name," he answered.

He speaks very indistinctly, for he has a cleft palate, attributed by some of the forest-folk to the machinations of the snakes, whose enemy he has been for so many years.

"The snakes tried to dumfound him," said an old woman, speaking to me of Brusher Mills a few days after my first meeting with him—"tried to dumfound him, they did, so he couldn't say what he was doing on people's land, and would be warned off for trespassing. But he kept enough speech to tell, an' now he's mortal hard on every snake he meets. They're sorry by now they could not close his mouth altogether."

"You've started already," I remarked to Brusher Mills, when he had seated himself in the porch and removed a few coats and weapons. "What is your catch down to the present?"

HOLDING UP ADDER.

SHOWING FANGS OF ADDER.

"Since I started," replied the old man readily, "it is twenty-one years, and down to this day I've caught 4,086 adders and 29,396 snakes."

"They can't be so easy to catch now?" I suggested; "you don't give them time to increase."

"That is so," he admitted. "In my first two years I caught 1,076 adders, so in the past nineteen I've had only some 3,000. Then, I can't get about now as I did. I took the influenza thirteen years ago, and it made me weak. Still, I can't complain. I'm sixty-three, and only bad weather takes me in the chest. Of course, there's nothing to do in the winter; but we often get rough days here after the snakes are stirring."

His utterances were very difficult to follow, apart from the cleft palate that cut his words in pieces. I could not help thinking that the long association with forest life had done for him what it does to some of the dwellers in the Black Forest and Harz Mountains or the vast game-preserves of more eastern

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Europe, and had added to his knowledge of the wood at the cost of his ease and fluency among men. I persevered, and found before we parted that I could catch the drift of his meaning. In the porch, and subsequently by his hut in the forest, we had a long chat, and I set down the chief points of it, in Brusher Mills's own words, so far as I could follow them.

"I was born a gardener," he remarked quaintly; "and when I used to work at gardens, I found out what a lot of damage the snakes were doing. Farmers used to lose sheep and cattle by the bites of the adders; and the other snakes that are not poisonous used to take large numbers of eggs—partridges and pheasants, too, very often. This is a big game-preserving part, as you will know, and there were endless complaints. I soon learned where to look for snakes and how to pick them up, and then I tried some experiments for curing bites with adder's oil, after a way old people used to talk about." To-day Brusher Mills has several remedies for snake-bites, and they seem to find favour in a large circle of clients.

"BRUSHER MILLS" BEING JEERED AT BY GIPSIES.

"Well, at last I decided to give up the gardening," he continued, "and to give all my time to the snakes. I had found out where they were fond of hiding, where they breed, at what time of the day to expect them, and where they go to sleep. So I started off, and from the first everybody welcomed me. Farmers were pleased to see me, gamekeepers allowed me to go where I liked, and everybody knew that I came to their land to do all the good I could. Now I can go all over the forest; there isn't a place closed to me, and I'm proud to think it is so. I've never touched egg or bird or anything that doesn't concern me, except a branch like the one I hold in my hand here to keep the flies away. There was a keeper once objected to that. 'Leave those trees alone in future,' he said, 'and give me back the branch you've taken.' 'I'll not come near you or your trees again,' I answered him; 'and here's the branch, if you dare pick it up.' And so saying, I put it on the ground, and opened the lid of the tin where I keep the adders; an' then he just walked his way an' I went mine, and in the future he can catch his own adders if he wants some."

"How do you get a living out of the work?" I said. "You can't eat snakes, nor dress in their skins."

"People give me a trifle when I go to work on their land," he replied; "and folk like you who are interested in my business make me a present; and then o' Sundays and holidays there's many scores of folk coming to the hut in the forest, an' when I've shown it to them, they give me something, too. Then I sell a lot of the snakes, alive or dead, to people who want them. I get along well enough"; and so saying, he pressed his hand over the two waistcoats and the two over-lapping coats and smiled, full of great content with things as he finds them.

"What have you caught to-day?" I asked him, and he proceeded to open one of the tin cans.

One adder was writhing uneasily among

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APPLYING OINTMENT TO ADDER BITE.

three or four harmless grass-snakes of varying lengths.

"Come out," said Brusher Mills, earnestly hunting for the adder's neck with his long scissors. "You've got to come to me, same as you had this morning when I found you first. So come along."

The reluctant adder was not proof against this persuasion, came out on the flat, blunt ends of the scissors, showed his evil teeth and poisoning apparatus, and retired to the bottom of the tin can, writhing with indignation.

"You've got to be as cunning as they are, and more, too," observed Brusher Mills; "for you must know where they hide, and pounce on them quickly, hold them down with the stick until you can pick them up with the scissors. They're far more cunning to-day than they used to be; but, then, so am I. When the back of a snake has zigzag marks on it, you know it is dangerous to handle it; when there are no marks, and a bright golden ring goes round the neck, you can pick it up and not be at all afraid. And if you do get bitten, tie the limb tightly well above the bite, to prevent the poison getting through you easily; and then—— I know what to do well enough."

Some time after our first chat, I overtook Brusher Mills as I cycled along the high road that goes through the forest from Brockenhurst to Lyndhurst. He was noticeable a long way off for his upright bearing—the coats and basket and waterproof did nothing to bend him down. "Ah! I'll be able to show you my hut now," he said. "Come this way." So saying, he turned abruptly into the forest, and I followed him.

Almost as soon as we had left the road, the forest closed round us; but the old man was familiar with every track, and I made a note of the direction and marked three or four trees with the chalky powder from the repairing outfit in my bicycle-bag, in order that I might return unaided. We walked for about half a mile over the soft turf under the high trees, and then came abruptly to a little clearing where "the cabin," as local folk call it, stands. It is built of turf in the shape of a cone, with some cross-beams on top and some poles round it. These poles are not a part of the building, but are placed round the hut by Brusher Mills when he starts on his rounds, so that he can see at once if any trespassers have been intruding upon

CUTTING FINGER WHICH ADDER HAD BITTEN—TO LET OUT BLOOD.

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it. A quick glance assured him that all was well. He began to remove the poles, and one of them brought away the turf door with it, showing the interior of the hut, with its bed of dried ferns, its old tins full of firewood, and a few odds and ends of equal worth. One thing was quite clear: the owner thought a great deal of his house, and I was prompt to praise it.

"Nobody would dare to come here and steal anything," said Brusher Mills; "for they couldn't put all these poles back as they found them, and I'd track 'em right through the forest; and if they went on the high road, they'd be stopped."

I expressed the hope that Hampshire held very few desperadoes who would raid the cabin to carry off the bracken bed or the old biscuit-tins filled with firewood, or even the empty jam-pots; and their proprietor admitted that he had been successful in preserving his home and goods intact hitherto, but he could not tell how long he was going to be so fortunate.

"The gipsies," he said mysteriously, "are the danger. I can't abide gipsies, and never could; and well they know it. But they know I'm not afraid of them."

I think there is a long-standing feud between the gipsies and the snake-catcher because they have one trade in common—the cure or attempted cure of sick animals. Naturally enough, the country-folk admit Brusher Mills to their land far more readily than they would admit gipsies, for the old man is known to be honest, and gipsies have an unfortunate reputation in connection with poultry and portable goods. Gamekeepers and foresters side with Brusher Mills against the gipsies, and doubtless this accounts for the immunity he has enjoyed so long.

Like the Walrus and the Carpenter, we talked of many things, and Brusher Mills told me of his long pilgrimages into the most distant corners of the woods, and the kind reception he met with from all sorts and conditions of men. "I'm known all over the world," he said with simple modesty—"even in the next county to this."

All the flora and fauna of the forest are known to him; but "vipers and adders and grass-snakes are what I've been sent here for to catch," he added; "and if it hadn't been for the influenza thirteen years ago, I'd be strong still and never mind the damp."

Like all really successful men, Brusher Mills takes his work very seriously. I should be prepared to believe that he thinks he was sent to the New Forest to do for it as St. Patrick did for Ireland, and that he would subscribe readily enough to the legend that the snakes conspired to give him a cleft palate, that he might not be able to explain that he was not trespassing in search of game when landowners or gamekeepers found him in preserved places. Living by himself as he does, and being a mighty huntsman, if only of snakes, he has been with Nature and away from his fellow-men for so long, that he could hardly be expected to think in the conventional fashion of men who are never left alone.

We chatted until the great shadows began to lengthen on every side, and Brusher Mills had explained, in practical fashion, the proper way of pinning a snake with a cleft stick, and how to handle it so that it could not bite if it tried. He told me when and where to look for little colonies of snakes, and how to attack them in order to secure the greatest number, and where the rest would probably go to escape.

Finally, he restored the door and the props to the little hut, resumed his coats, straw basket, waterproof, and the *impedimenta* of his trade, and started off by way of a forest track to Lyndhurst, while I made slow way back to the point at which we entered the wood, very grateful to myself for having made the marks that guided me to the high road.

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THE CAREER OF JOAN CARTHEW:

THE ADVENTURES OF A GIRL WHO HAD NOTHING AND WANTED EVERYTHING.

By Mrs. C. N. WILLIAMSON.*

No. VI.—KISMET AND A V.C.

"NOW, where on earth have I seen that girl before?" Joan Carthew asked herself.

It was at Biarritz, where she was enjoying, as she put it to herself, a well-earned holiday; and she was known at her hotel, and among the few acquaintances she had made, as the Comtesse de Merival, a young widow with plenty of money. She was a Comtesse because it is easy to say that one has married a sprig of foreign nobility, without being found out; she was a widow because it is possible for a widow to be alone, unchaperoned, and to amuse herself without ceasing to be *comme il faut*.

Joan had amused herself a great deal during the six weeks since she had left England, and the cream of the amusement had consisted in inventing a romantic story about herself and getting it believed. It was as good as acting in a successful play which one has written for oneself.

At the present moment she was walking on the *plage*, pleasantly conscious that she was one of the prettiest and best-dressed women among many who were pretty and well-dressed. Then a blonde girl passed her, a blonde girl who was new to Biarritz, but who, somehow, did not seem new to Joan's retina. Her photograph was somewhere in the book of memory, and, oddly enough, it seemed to have a background of sea and blue sky, as it had to-day.

The girl was pretty, as a beautifully dressed, golden-haired doll in a shop window is pretty. She was also exceedingly "good form," and she was vouched for as a young person of importance by a remarkably distinguished-looking old man who strolled beside her.

They turned, and in passing the "Comtesse" for the second time, the girl looked full in Joan's face, with a lingering gaze such as a spoiled beauty often directs upon a possible rival.

Then, all in an instant, Joan knew.

"Why," she exclaimed mentally, "it's the girl I saw at Brighton—the girl I envied. I know it is she. That's nine years ago, but I cannot be mistaken."

Somehow this seemed an important discovery. If Joan, a miserable, overworked slavey of twelve, nursing her tyrant's baby, had not been bitten with consuming jealousy of a child no older but a thousand times more fortunate than herself, she might have gone on indefinitely as a slavey and never have had a career.

The little girl at Brighton had looked scornfully from under her softly drooping Leghorn hat at the shabby child-nurse, and a rage of resentment had boiled in Joan's passionate young heart. Now, the tall girl at Biarritz looked with half-reluctant admiration from under an equally becoming hat, at the Comtesse de Merival, who was more beautiful and apparently quite as fortunate as she. Nevertheless the old scar suddenly throbbed again, so that Joan remembered there had once been a wound; and she knew that she had no gratitude for the girl to whom, indirectly, she owed her rise in the world.

Joan was usually generous to women, even when she had no cause to love them, for, with all her faults, there was nothing of the "cat" in her nature; yet, to her surprise, she felt that she would like to hurt this girl in some way. "What a brute I must be!" she said to herself. "I didn't know I was so bad. Really I mustn't let this sort of thing grow on me, otherwise I shall degenerate from a highwayman (rather a gallant

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one, I think) into a cad, and I should lose interest in foraging for myself if I were a cad."

As she thought this, the girl and her companion were joined by a man. Joan glanced, then gazed, and decided that he was the most interesting man to look at whom she had ever seen in her life. Not that he was the handsomest, as mere beauty of feature goes, but he was of exactly the type which Joan and most women admire at heart above all others.

One did not need to be told, to know that he was a soldier. As he stood talking to his friends, with his hat off, and the sun chiselling the ripples of his close-cropped hair, in bronze, his head towered above those of the other men who came and went. His face was bronze, too, of a lighter shade, blending into ivory half way up the forehead, and his features were strong and clear-cut as a bronze man's should always be. He wore no moustache or beard, and his mouth and chin were self-reliant, firm, and generous, but Joan liked his eyes best of all. As she passed slowly, they met hers for a second, and their clear depths were brown and bright as a Devonshire brook when the noonday sun shines into it.

It was only for a second that the man's soul looked at her from its windows, but it was long enough to make her sharply realise two facts. One, that she was far, far beneath him; the other, that he was the only man in the world for her.

"To think that *that* girl should know him, and I not!" she said to herself rebelliously. "He is miles too good for me, but he's more miles too good for her, because she hasn't any soul, and I have, even though it's a bad one. Again, after all these years, that girl passes through my life, taking with her as she goes what I would give all I own, all I might ever gain, to have. It's Kismet—nothing less."

"*Ah, Comtesse, bon jour!*" murmured a voice that Joan knew, and then it went on in very good English, with only a slight foreign accent: "You are charming to-day, but you do not see your friends. They must remind you of their existence before they can win a bow."

"I have just seen someone who was like a ghost out of the past," returned Joan, with a careless smile for the handsome, dark young man who had stopped to greet her.

"What!" his face lighted up. "You know that young lady you were looking at? That is indeed interesting, and I will tell you why, presently, if you will let me. If you would but introduce me—at all events, to the father. The rest I can do for myself."

"I don't know her," said Joan, "although an important issue of my life was associated with the girl. I can't even give you her name."

"I can do as much as that, for you," said the Marchese Villa Fora. "She is a Miss Violet Ffrench, and the old man is her father, General Ffrench. Not only is she one of the greatest beauties, but one of the greatest heiresses in England."

"Ah!" said Joan, "no wonder you are interested."

"No wonder. But what good does that do to me, since I have not the honour of her acquaintance, and since she is to marry that great, bronze statue of a fellow?"

A pang shot through Joan's heart, and she was ashamed because it was a jealous pang. "She is to marry him! How do you know that, since you are not acquainted with her?"

"It is an open secret. I saw the father and daughter in Paris three weeks ago, and fell in love at first sight—ah! you may laugh. You Englishwomen cannot understand us Latins. It is true that I proposed to you, but you would not take me, and my heart was soon after caught in the rebound. It is very simple."

"You thought that you fell in love with me at first sight, too; at least, you said so, and without any introduction except picking up my purse when I dropped it in the Champs Élysées."

"I got an introduction afterwards."

"Yes, a lady who was staying at my hotel."

"At all events, she vouched for me. She has known my family for years, in Madrid."

"She warned me against you, Marchese. She said that you were a fortune-hunter, and that you fancied I was rich. When you had proposed, and I had told you frankly that my fortune was but silver-gilt, warranted to keep its colour for a few years only, you were very much obliged to me for refusing you, as it saved you the trouble of jilting me afterwards. You are still more obliged to me now that you have met a genuine heiress who has all other desirable qualifications as well."

"You are cruel," exclaimed Villa Fora, to whose style of good looks reproaches were becoming. "Cannot a man love twice? What does it matter to the heart whether there has been an interval of weeks or of

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"'Ah, Comtesse, bon jour!'"

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years? I am madly in love with Miss Ffrench, and as you promised to be my friend if I would 'talk no more nonsense,' I have no hesitation in confessing it to you. I followed her here from Paris, and arrived only this afternoon. She is at the Hôtel Victoria; therefore, so am I."

"So am I, but not 'therefore,'" cut in Joan. "And the—the man you say she is to marry?"

"Colonel Sir Justin Wentworth? He is at the Grand. But he has come for her. I know the whole story—I have it from a gossiping old lady who is *au courant* with everyone's affairs if they are worth bothering with; and she does not make mistakes. She has told me that General Ffrench was the guardian of this Sir Justin, that the father—a baronet—was his dearest friend. The match has been an understood thing ever since Wentworth was sixteen and the girl five; for there is eleven years' difference in their ages."

"Then he is about thirty-two or three," said Joan thoughtfully.

"Yes, but in that I am not interested. The awful part for me is that the girl is now of age, and the obstacle of her youth no longer prevents the marriage. Any day the worst may happen. If I could only meet her, I might have a chance to undermine the cold, bronze statue, even though he has a great reputation as a soldier, and is a V.C. But how to manage an introduction? The father has the air of a mediæval dragon."

Joan's heart said: "The man is not a cold statue," but aloud she remarked: "I see now why you hoped that I knew Miss Ffrench. You wanted *me* to manage it. Well, perhaps I can, even as it is. I have undertaken more difficult things and succeeded."

"Oh, if you would! But why should I hope it, since you have nothing to gain?"

Joan dropped her eyes and did not answer.

"Yet you will try?" pleaded Villa Fora.

"Yet I will try, on one condition. You must be a connection of the late Comte de Merival."

"Your husband!"

Joan smiled as she nodded.

"'I was so busy pitying someone else.'"

"I am Spanish; he was, I understand, French. But then that presents no difficulty. There are such things as international marriages."

"Yes. Your mother's sister married an uncle of my husband's, didn't she?"

"Quite so. It is settled," agreed the Marchese gravely.

"Well, then, that is the sharp end of the wedge. I will do my best and cleverest to insert it," said Joan. "As you have just

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arrived, it will be the easier. We are cousins. It can appear to all those whom it does not concern (meaning the gossips of the hotel) that you have run on to see your cousin. For the rest, you must trust me for a day or two, or perhaps more."

Joan had tea—with her cousin—at Miremont's; and they saw the Ffrenches and Sir Justin Wentworth, also having tea. Violet Ffrench looked at Joan with the same side-glance of half-grudging admiration as before, and Joan looked, now and then, at Violet Ffrench with a charming, frank gaze, which seemed to say: "You are so sweetly pretty that I can't keep my eyes off you, and I like you for being pretty." In reality it said something quite different, but it was effects, not realities, which mattered at the moment.

Thus the campaign had begun, though the enemy was blissfully ignorant of the activity upon the other side.

Joan went back to the hotel rather earlier than she had intended, and going straight to the large, empty dining-room, rang for the head waiter. When he appeared, she asked if it were yet arranged where a new arrival, General Ffrench, was to sit with his daughter. The waiter pointed out a small table for two, near the centre of the room; but before his hand withdrew from the gesture, it was turned palm upward in answer to a slight, silent hint from Joan. Finally, it retired with a louis in its clasp. "I want you to put my table close to theirs," said she. "It shall be done, madame," replied the man; and it was done. Therefore Joan and Violet could scarcely help exchanging more glances from between their red-shaded candles that night at dinner, which Joan ate alone, unaccompanied by the wistful Villa Fora.

The Ffrenches appeared to know nobody in the hotel, and of this she was glad. There was the more chance for her.

After dinner there was conjuring, and Joan contrived to sit next to Miss Ffrench. Villa Fora was on the opposite side of the big drawing-room, where he had reluctantly gone in obedience to his "cousin's" instructions. The conjuring made conversation, and Joan was not surprised to find the heiress open to flattery. When the performance was over, she kept her seat; and by this time, having introduced herself to Miss Ffrench, the introduction was passed on to the father. He, good man, was too well-born to be actually a snob, but he had no objection to titles, even foreign ones, and the Comtesse de Merival was so pretty, so modest, altogether such good form, that he had no objection to her as, at least, an hotel acquaintance for his daughter.

It seemed that General Ffrench had been ordered to Biarritz for his health, and that he hoped to do some golfing; but Miss Ffrench hated golf, and as she had no friends in the place, she expected to be very dull.

At this, Joan reminded her gaily of the friend with whom she and her father had been walking in the afternoon.

"Oh, but he is such an old friend, he doesn't count," exclaimed Violet, blushing a little.

"She isn't a bit in love with him," thought Joan. "What a shame! But—*tant mieux*. She is vain and romantic; often the two qualities go together in a woman. The ground is all prepared for me."

By and by, Sir Justin Wentworth strolled in from his hotel. Though she was dying to stay and meet him, and perhaps have a few words, Joan rose and walked away. This course was approved by General Ffrench. He would have known what to think if the beautiful Comtesse had made herself fascinating, at such short notice, to his son-in-law elect.

Joan talked with her "cousin," who had been in the smoking-room, and Violet Ffrench had time to be intensely curious as to the connection between her charming new acquaintance, the Comtesse de Merival, and the handsome, dark young man who had been in her hotel at Paris. He had looked at her then; he looked at her now. What was he to the Comtesse? what was the Comtesse to him?

Next morning, both General Ffrench and Sir Justin Wentworth walked off to the golf-links, leaving Violet to write letters in the glass room that looked out on the sea. Presently Joan came in, with a writing-case in her hand, and Violet stopped in the midst of the first sentence of her first letter. Joan did not even begin to write, nor had she ever cherished the faintest intention of doing so.

Violet rather hoped that she would mention the dark young man, but she did not; and then, of course, Violet hoped it a great deal more. The two girls drifted from one subject to another, and finally, by way of a favourite author and a popular novel of the moment, they touched the key of romance.

"I used to think that romance was dead

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in this century, but lately I have been finding out that it isn't," said Joan. "Oh, not personally. Romance is over for me. I loved my husband, you see, and he died the day of our wedding; I married him on his death-bed. That is not romance; it is tragedy. But I am speaking of what I should not speak of, to you, so let us talk of something else."

"Why?" asked Violet.

"Oh, because—because I have an idea that you are engaged."

"How can that matter?"

"It does matter. I oughtn't to explain, so you mustn't urge me."

"You rouse my curiosity," said Violet; but this was not news to Joan.

"Engaged girls shouldn't have curiosity about anything outside their own romances," replied the Comtesse de Merival mysteriously.

"I've never had a real romance," sighed Violet. "I've always been more or less engaged to Sir Justin Wentworth ever since I can remember. He is a splendid fellow, as you can see."

"I hardly noticed," said Joan; then added, in a whisper, but not too low a whisper to be heard: "I was so busy pitying someone else."

Violet's colour rose, and she was really a very pretty girl, though vanity made her eyes cold.

"Sir Justin's father and mine were old chums," went on Violet. "Our place and his lie close together in Devonshire. We have even some of the same money-interests—mines in Australia. He has heaps of money, too, so there's no question of his needing to think of mine."

"As if any man could think of your money when he had you to think of!" exclaimed Joan. "No doubt you will be very happy. Such a long friendship ought to be a good foundation for the rest, and yet—and yet—it's a pity that you should have to marry and become a placid British matron without first knowing some of the wild joys of *real* love, real romance."

"I thought you doubted there being any left in the world?"

"No; I said I had found at least *one* case which had built up my faith again; a case of passionate love, born at first sight, and strong enough to carry the man across the world, if necessary, to follow the woman he loves."

"Such love isn't likely to come my way."

"It has come your way. It is here—close to you. Oh, I have done wrong! I should not have spoken. But I am so sorry for him—my poor, handsome cousin."

"Your cousin!" This was a revelation, and Violet's eyes were not cold now, but warm with interest.

"Yes, the Marchese Villa Fora, the best-looking and one of the best-born young men in Spain. But indeed we must not talk of him. What a lovely day it is! I must have my motor-car out this afternoon. How I should love to take you with me!"

Violet would ask no more questions; but all that had been dark was now clear, and she could think of nothing and no one except the Comtesse's cousin, the Marchese Villa Fora.

Joan had been in the hotel at Biarritz for ten days, and by the trick of "being nice" (she knew how to be very nice) to the unattached old ladies and middle-aged dowagers, she had been accepted on her own valuation. She did not flirt, she had a title, she appeared to be rich, she owned a motor-car, therefore none of her statements regarding herself was doubted. General Ffrench made an inquiry or two concerning her, was satisfied with the replies, and therefore consented to let his daughter join an automobile party arranged by the Comtesse for the afternoon.

Somehow, in the motor-car, Violet sat next to the Marchese Villa Fora, who gazed at her sadly with magnificent eyes and said very little. It was extremely interesting, she discovered, to sit shoulder to shoulder with a man who was dying of hopeless love for you, and had followed you across France, though he had never spoken a word to you until to-day. It was he who helped her out when they came back to the hotel, and the thrill in her fingers after his had pressed them almost convulsively for an instant remained for a long time.

Now, the thin end of the entering wedge, of which Joan had hinted, was well in, and after this day events moved swiftly. The Comtesse de Merival and Miss Ffrench were close friends. Violet opened her heart to Joan and told her everything that was in it—not a long list. Joan sympathised and advised. She did so want dear Violet to be happy, she said, for happiness was the best thing in the world; and love was happiness. She wanted her to have that.

The two girls were together constantly, and this meant that Joan soon began to see a good deal of Sir Justin Wentworth.

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Quickly she diagnosed that he cared nothing for Violet Ffrench, except in a kindly, protective, affectionate way, but that he had a deep regard for her father. He would never try to free himself of the tacit understanding into which he had drifted as a boy; if any change were to come, the initiative must be taken, and firmly taken, by Violet.

"Violet sat next to the Marchese."

Meanwhile, two things were happening. If Violet was not precisely falling in love with Villa Fora, she was in love with the idea of him which was growing up in her mind; and Justin Wentworth had discovered that he craved for something more in life than Violet Ffrench could ever give him.

He had gone on contentedly enough for the several years during which he had definitely thought of the marriage. There had been the Boer war, and then the interest of coming home to England and his beautiful old place in Devonshire, which he loved. But suddenly he had awakened to the fact that contentment is no better than desperate resignation; and though he was hardly aware of it yet, the awakening had come to him when looking into Joan's eyes.

He would not confess to himself that he loved her, but he thought that she was the most vivid creature he had ever met, and he could not help realising how curiously congenial they were in most of their thoughts. Often he seemed to feel what she was feeling, without a word being spoken on either side, and unconsciously he was passionately jealous of the handsome Spanish cousin with whom (General Ffrench innocently suggested) the Comtesse would probably make a match.

Joan, on her part, cared too much by this time to be able to see clearly, where her own affairs were concerned. She had begun the little comedy she was playing not for the sake of Villa Fora, but for her own, with the deliberate intention of separating Violet Ffrench from Justin Wentworth, even though she might never come any nearer to him herself. All the machinery which she had set going was running smoothly. Violet was fascinated by Villa Fora, was meeting him secretly and receiving notes from him; he was determined to bring matters to a climax soon, and was sure of his success. General Ffrench played golf all day, bridge half the night, and suspected nothing; nor, apparently, did anyone else. Still, Joan was more miserable than she had ever been in her life—far more miserable than when Lady Thorndyke had died without making a new will and left her penniless.

The girl saw herself at last as she was, unscrupulous, an adventuress, living on her wits and the lack of wits in others. She hated herself, and worshipped more and more each day the honourable soldier from

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whom her own unworthiness (if there were no other barrier) must, she felt, put her irrevocably apart.

Even as Joan talked to Violet of Wentworth and Villa Fora, outwardly agreeing with the girl that the one was cold, that it was the other who knew how to love, her whole soul was in rebellion against itself. "He does not think of me at all," she would repeat over and over again, despite the secret voice of instinct which whispered a contradiction. "He doesn't think of me; and even if he did, he would only have to know half the truth to despise me as the vilest of women."

Then, one day, there was a great scandal at the hotel. The Marchese Villa Fora had run away with Miss Violet Ffrench, in the Comtesse de Merival's motor-car, which lately he had been learning to drive. Even Joan was taken by surprise, for she had not known that the thing was going to happen so soon. She was actually able to tell the truth—or something approaching the truth—when she assured the father and the deserted *fiancé* that she was innocent of complicity. So candid were her beautiful, wet eyes, so tremulous her sweet voice, and so pale the delicate oval of her cheeks, that both men believed her, and one of them was so happy in this sudden relief from the weight of a great burden that he could have sung aloud.

General Ffrench was far from happy; but he determined that, rather than give fuel to the scandal, he would make the best of things as they were. To this course he was partly persuaded by the counsels of Justin Wentworth. Villa Fora was undoubtedly what he pretended to be, a Spanish marquis of very ancient and honourable lineage, though it would take many golden bricks to rebuild the family castle in Spain. The girl had gone with him, and gone too far before the truth came out to be brought back with good grace, therefore it were well to let her become the Marchesa Villa Fora quietly, without useless ragings.

The thing Joan had set herself to accomplish was done; she had separated Justin Wentworth and Violet Ffrench for ever, and now the end had come. She was hurt and sore, and could hardly bear to see her own face in the glass, for she imagined that it had grown hard and cruel—that Justin Wentworth must find it so.

General Ffrench openly announced his daughter's marriage to the Marchese Villa Fora and told all inquirers that he was going to her in Madrid; but Justin Wentworth would not, of course, accompany his old friend on such a mission. He would set his face towards England, and with this intention he said "Good-bye" to the Comtesse de Merival.

"This has hurt and shocked you, too," he said. "There is one thing I must say to you, and it is this: it is only for her father that I care. I want her to be happy in her own way. We did not suit each other."

"I used sometimes to think not," Joan answered in a voice genuinely broken. "I used to be afraid that—if you should ever marry—you would not have been happy. Perhaps she—wasn't the right one for you."

Her eyes were downcast, but the compelling magnetism in the man's caught them up to his and held them.

"I have known that she wasn't the right one for a long time," he said. "I have known the right one, and it is you. I love you with all my heart and soul. I want you. You are the one woman on earth for me. I hadn't meant to say this now, but—I can't let you go out of my life. I must do all I can to keep you always."

"Don't!" gasped Joan. "Don't! it will kill me. Oh, if you only knew, how you would hate me!"

"Nothing could make me hate you."

"Yes. Wait!" And then Joan poured out the whole story—not only of this last fraud, but of all the frauds; the story of her "career."

He listened to the end, without interrupting her once. Then, at last, when the strange tale was finished, and the pale girl was silent from sheer exhaustion of the hopeless spirit tasting its punishment in purgatory, he held out his arms.

"Poor, little, lonely girl!" he said. "How sorry I am for you! How I want to comfort and take care of you all the rest of your life, so that it may be clear and white, as your true self would have it be! And—how glad I am that you're not a widowed Comtesse!"

* * * * *

She was in his arms still when a knock at the door roused them both from the first dream of real happiness the girl had ever known.

A servant brought a card. She took it from the tray and read it out mechanically: "Mr. George Gallon."

"Tell the gentleman——" she had begun; but before she could go further with her instructions George Gallon himself had entered the room.

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"Well, Miss Carthew," he said, "I heard from an unexpected source that you were here, swaggering about as the widow of a French Comte. I needed a little holiday, and so I ran out to see whether you were a greater success as a Comtesse than you were as a typewriter in my office. Oh! I beg your pardon. You're not alone. I'm afraid I may have surprised your friend with some disagreeable news."

"'When do you intend to leave Biarritz?'"

"Not at all," said Justin Wentworth calmly. "Miss Carthew has not only told me of that episode in her life, but how it become necessary for her to take up the position of a typewriter. Your treatment of her seemed almost incredible—until I saw you. No wonder it was necessary for Miss Carthew to adopt an *alias*, if this is the sort of persecution she is subject to under her own name. But in future it will be different. As Lady Wentworth she will be safe even from cads like you; and though she is not yet my wife, I am thankful to say I have even now the right to protect her. When do you intend to leave Biarritz, Mr. Gallon?"

George opened his lips furiously, but snapped them shut again. Then, having paused to reflect, he said: "I am here only for an hour. I'm going on to Spain."

"Pray watch over your tongue in that hour," returned Wentworth.

Then George Gallon was gone.

"I'll worship you all my life on my knees," said Joan. "I'm not worthy to touch your hand. But I will be. I will be a new self."

"Only the best of the old one, that is all I want," answered her lover. "The past is like a garment which you wore for protection against the storm. But there will be no more storms after this."

"Because you have forgiven me, because you believe in me," cried Joan, "you will make of me the woman you would have me to be!"

"The woman you really are, or I would not have loved you," he said.

And so it was that Joan Carthew's career ended and her life began.

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THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

"ONCE UPON A TIME."

"TELL me a story."

"My dear Joyce, it is a physical impossibility; I have got a cold in my head."

"I don't mind," returned Joyce generously.

"Do," I said firmly; "but suppose you tell be ode for a chadge."

Joyce's face brightened. "Very well," she said; "what about? Naughty little girls and boys, or the Zoo, or heaven, or—princesses?" Joyce has a habit of always keeping the best till last, a practice applied to pudding as well as to suggestions.

"Princesses," I said, and arranged myself comfortably upon the sofa.

Joyce adopted a precarious position on the back of a chair and stroked her chin meditatively.

"Once upon a time there was an awful giant, who lived in an enormous castle. For his breakfast he ate twenty babies, at dinner he had sixty princesses, and for his supper he had eleven poached nannas."

"How unpleasant for him!" I murmured.

"And besides that, when he was hungry, he used to steal little girls' toys, dolls and dolls' houses, and kaleidiscups, and paint-boxes, and swallow them down at a gulp."

"He had a happy digestion," I sighed enviously.

"And underneath his castle was a cave, full of gold and silver, and dimons, and threepenny bits; and one day a prince came and said he was going to carry away all the treasures, because he wanted to marry a beautiful princess."

"That's a thing princes often say," I observed dreamily.

Joyce took no heed of my remarks. With one hand clutching her chair, the other waving descriptively, and her eyes ablaze with excitement, she looked like the Tragic Muse in miniature.

"So the prince walked up to the castle to get the treasure."

"But that would be stealig," I objected.

"But he was a prince," said Joyce indignantly.

"Still, stealig is stealig," I remonstrated with weak morality.

"Not in a fairy story," said Joyce decisively. "So he told the giant: 'If you don't give me your treasure, I'll chop you in two.' But the giant put out all his ten tongues at him (he had ten heads), and said: 'I shan't, so there; and now I'm going to eat you!' But the prince wasn't afraid, 'cos he was armed all over. He had a great big gun, and an enormous sword, and"—Joyce's right hand was flung out with a gesture of defiance—"and a bit of sealin'-wax.

"So he shot off his gun into the middle of the giant, and that made him topple over; and then he cut off his heads with a swipe and tore him from limb to limb, so there was an end of him; and then

PERHAPS—PERHAPS NOT!

"AND the kind young gentleman will carry it home for you."

THE PRACTICAL POINT OF VIEW.

DOLLIE: Do the angels always wear white dresses like that, mamma?

MOTHER: Yes, dearie.

DOLLIE: What a lot of washing they must have on Mondays!

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THE POINT OF VIEW

SHE: Well, after all, look what my family and I have made you.
HE (meekly): My dear! have I ever blamed you for that?

the prince fastened all the heads to the floor with sealin'-wax, so that if the giant did recover they would be a warnin' to him."

Joyce turned and looked at me impressively. "What do you think of that?" she whispered.

I breathed heavily and collapsed limply among the cushions. "Go on," I gasped.

Joyce, entirely satisfied with the condition to which she had reduced me, nodded solemnly and continued: "So the prince filled his pockets with threepenny bits and dimons and rode away to his princess; but on the way"—Joyce's voice seemed to be dying away—"he—met—a——" It was such a comfortable sofa, I closed my eyes—just for a minute.

Suddenly a terrible shriek awoke me with a jar to the consciousness of my responsibilities. Joyce had tumbled from her chair and was seated upon the floor, her arms waving wildly, her face fearfully contorted. I sprang from the sofa. "My darling!" I cried, "what is it? You very naughty child!" I added, as I perceived that she was quite unhurt.

Joyce waved me away and, with delicious disregard of place and circumstances, continued her narrative. "Yes," she said, "the lion screamed just like that and fell down dead; and the prince, he knelt before the princess and said: 'See what I've got for you,' and he gave her five threepenny bits and a hundred dimons, and then they lived happily ever after."

Joyce had become purple with the exertion of extracting her prince from fairyland perils.

"Joyce," I said, "calm yourself, or you will certainly burst."

Joyce shook back her tumbled curls and smoothed her pinafore. "Before I bursted," she remarked composedly, "I should send for a policeman."

"That would be very useful," I observed scathingly.

"It would," said Joyce. "Now it's your turn to tell a story."

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"The stories in my head just now all have unhappy endings, and that makes you cry."

"*My* stories all end happily," said Joyce virtuously.

"Why?"

"Because real princes and princesses always do have happy endings."

"That's a mistake many people make," I sighed.

"No!" retorted Joyce. "It isn't a mistake; good people are always happy in the end—nanna says so."

Decidedly Joyce was getting the best of it. I resorted to sarcasm. "What a pity your nanna can't stay with you always to tell you these things!" I said.

"She's goin' to, *always*."

"Not when you are a big girl."

"Why not?" Joyce's mouth began to droop. "You've got a nanna."

"That's different." Argument was always one of my strong points.

Joyce sniffed. "When I go and act in a theatre like mummie, I shall take her with me."

"So you are going to be an actress?"

"Of course."

"Then perhaps it would be as well to keep a nanna, after all," I mused.

Joyce looked triumphant. "Now the story." Joyce came and curled up in my lap. "The story," she beseeched.

"Once upon a time——"

Dorothy Braithwaite.

PERSONALITIES.

BARBER: Your 'air's very thin on top, sir!

FARMER GILES (who resents personal criticism): Yes—and ain't you got a squint, neither!!

(Awkward silence).

THE UNANSWERABLE.

"WHY can't yer look like that when a bloke tikes yer out?"

THE POPULARITY OF ALGERNON FITZ CLARENCE.

ALGERNON FITZ CLARENCE was a "villain." Not from choice, but from the voice of circumstance and his friends. Personally he didn't care for Algernon Fitz Clarence; he even went to the length of saying that Tom Cosher was a good, honest, respectable name that no one need be ashamed of. There, again, he had acted under advice. Therefore, when he made his *début* before a meagre public, he appeared on the playbills as Algernon Fitz Clarence. That happened before circumstance and his friends had saddled him with villainy. It was, moreover, their reason for doing so. His friends pointed out that Nature obviously intended him to be a villain, because the audience had received him as such, notwithstanding the fact that he was ostensibly playing low comedy. Circumstance had stepped in, in the shape of the manager, who had placed villainy and "a rest" in the light of alternatives. Now, Algernon Fitz Clarence was a man of more than ordinary talent. He was also one of those persons who have a fund of good humour for their fellow-creatures, from whom they expect the same in return. Popularity is their necessity; want of it, their blight. You can see, then, with how much distaste the man viewed his occupation. His talents brought him enough hooting to have given most villains swelled heads for the remainder of their lives. His sensibilities were wounded to the quick by each reception. Algernon Fitz Clarence felt the strain severely. It was not as though the thing occurred

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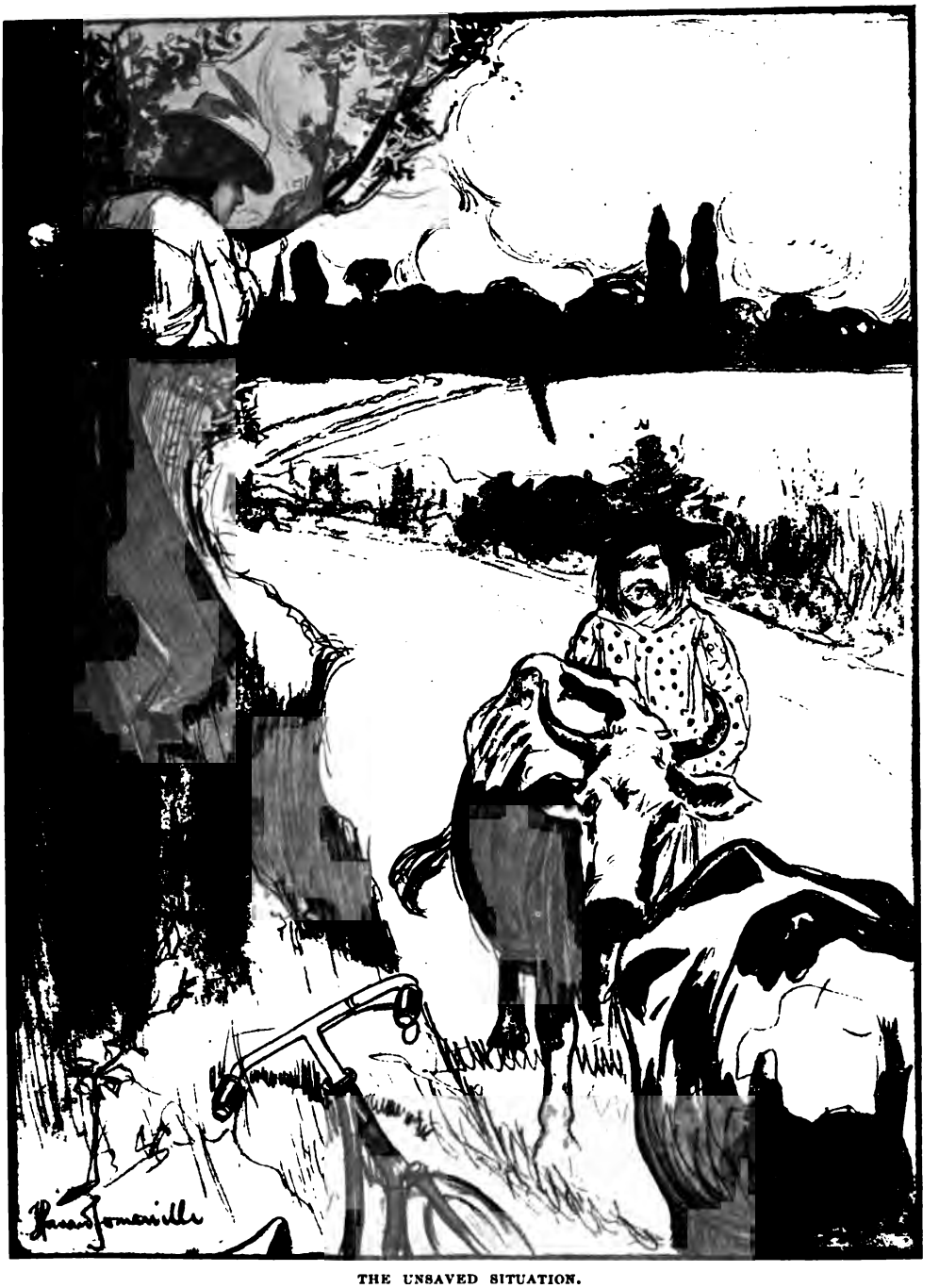

THE UNSAVED SITUATION.

FRIGHTENED CYCLIST: Is—is this the way to—to Slocum?
YOUTHFUL NATIVE: No'm. That ain't the way to no place.

periodically and at intervals; it was a nightly affair, it was part of his daily life. He longed for a respite. To go through one scene without that paralysing tribute of hisses—that was his dream. He began to cast about for some means of achieving his object. He could find none. Week following week, month following month, left him more unhappy and more determined.

To my mind, and to Algernon's, there is not the slightest doubt but that melancholia, insanity, or

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